

# Broadway Starts to Rock: Musical Theater Orchestrations and Character, 1968-1975

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## **Abstract**

In 1968, the sound of the Broadway pit was forever changed with the rock ensemble that accompanied *Hair*. The musical backdrop for the show was appropriate for the countercultural subject matter, taking into account the popular genres of the time that were connected with such figures, and marrying them to other musical styles to help support the individual characters. Though popular styles had long been part of Broadway scores, it took more than a decade for rock to become a major influence in the commercial theater. The associations an audience had with rock music outside of a theater affected perception of the plot and characters in new ways and allowed for shows to be marketed toward younger demographics, expanding the audience base. Other shows contemporary to *Hair* began to include rock music and approaches as well; composers and orchestrators incorporated instruments such as electric guitar, bass, and synthesizer, amplification in the pit, and backup singers as components of their scores. Some shows were first released as concept albums, allowing the audience to learn the music before the show was staged; others supplied hit songs for the charts, recorded by known popular artists. In the decades since *Hair* premiered, nearly all new musicals have had rock instruments and styles included in their scores in some capacity, and rock often plays a major role in the storytelling.

Because orchestration is a seldom-researched topic in musical studies, and one without a specific path of inquiry, this turning point in the soundscape of the theater and its effects requires attention. How an arranger approaches orchestrating for a musical is ripe with possibilities for a discussion of the impact their decisions have on audiences, particularly in relation to how characters in a given show are perceived. This dissertation surveys a selection of shows from 1968-1975 whose orchestrators employed rock instrumentation, either as the entirety of the pit or alongside more traditionally orchestral instruments, and how their approaches affect characterization. These shows, which include *Hair*, *Promises, Promises* (1968), *Company* (1970), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1971), *Grease* (1972), *Pippin* (1972), *A Chorus Line* (1975) and *The Wiz* (1975), demonstrate the work of an array of composers and orchestrators and were derived from different subject matter and source material. Taking into account the backgrounds of the creative teams with particular attention to the orchestrators, the plots of the shows, and the figures presented in each musical, the chapters that follow each provide a discussion of musical numbers. Special attention to how the orchestration serves to support reception of the characters will be paid, as well the legacies of the orchestrators' work and techniques found in these shows. These studies reveal the inclusion of rock on Broadway to be a moment of fundamental change in many aspects of the genre and in how composer and orchestrators described characters and dramatic situations, new ideas that continue to influence the musical theater to the present day.

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## **Introduction**

“Orchestration is a way of enhancing a song — using the deviled egg metaphor — by taking it, mashing it up, adding some ingredients, mixing it, and putting it back together again.” – Jonathan Tunick<sup>1</sup>

The theatrical industry in New York in the mid-twentieth century was experiencing a period of transition. Not only were writers of Broadway musicals gradually incorporating more controversial subject matter into scripts and lyrics, including such hot-button topics as race relations and overt sexuality, but slowly the genre’s sound was progressing as well by infusing the scores with rock music. Though musicals had included popular sounds and styles for some time, in such productions as those composed by songwriters like Gershwin (including *Of Thee I Sing* in 1931), *Bye Bye Birdie* (1960), which evokes the sound of early rock ‘n’ roll, and *Cabaret* (1966), which heavily features jazz in its score, the later inclusion of rock and electronic instruments into the pit orchestra during the 1960s had a lasting impact on the sound and construction of then-contemporary and modern shows.<sup>2</sup>

This sudden venture into a soundscape that was associated with extra-musical ideas of rebellion and sexuality did not always appeal to audiences. In fact, some viewers were outwardly resistant to a perceived affront to the traditional, predictable music of the theater.<sup>3</sup> Yet others adapted to this change as a method of keeping the art form alive, because the theater had become associated with an older demographic and ticket sales were waning. As a result, some audience

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<sup>1</sup> Craig Zadan, *Sondheim & Co.* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1989), 154.

<sup>2</sup> *Cabaret*’s score includes jazz due to both its physical setting in a nightclub and its temporal setting of Nazi-occupied Germany of the 1940s.

<sup>3</sup> Eric Salzman and Thomas Desi, *The New Music Theater: Seeing the Voice, Hearing the Body* (New York: Oxford, 2008), 21.

members approached theatrical productions differently and with an open mind, new accessibility to the music as well as the plots. While not all theatergoers warmed to this musical change, a surge in popularity of Broadway in the late 1960s and early 1970s established that building rock music and instruments into scores would be one way to appeal to a larger audience base, increase revenue, and enable production teams to tackle topics for which rock music would be more appropriate, such as rebellion, drugs, and sex.

Though popular styles had indeed been heard in musical scores before the later years of the 1960s, for the most part those styles had been included in only a small percentage of the shows, and were usually meant to serve as markers of time and place. Both *Show Boat* (1927) and *Li'l Abner* (1956), for example, included guitars in their pits, though in *Abner* they helped to provide the country flavor needed for Al Capp's hillbilly Dogpatch, and in *Show Boat* they were a means of depicting the South, music appropriate for the show's black characters, and as a diagetic tool for Magnolia Hawkes's later popular singing career. The electric guitar did not become a fully-integrated member of the orchestra pit until *Bye Bye Birdie* in 1960, where much of the score was intended to satirize the music and hype surrounding Elvis Presley being drafted into the army.<sup>4</sup> Even then, much of the show's score was supplied by a more traditional orchestra pit, with the rock sounds saved to accompany the Elvis surrogate, Conrad Birdie, in his featured numbers, as well as numbers concerning the kids, such as "The Telephone Hour."<sup>5</sup>

With the staging of *Hair*, however, the sound of Broadway music changed forever. Not only did the guitar become a fully-integrated member of the pit, but it was one of its stars, along

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<sup>4</sup> Ethan Mordden, *One More Kiss: The Broadway Musical in the 1970s* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 55.

<sup>5</sup> Steven Suskin, *The Sound of Broadway Music: A Book of Orchestrators and Orchestrations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 221.

with electric bass, synthesizers, and drum sets, all instruments associated with popular artists and a variety of musical styles. Noted for its mix of popular genres, a rock instrument-infused score that helped provide a period appropriate musical backdrop to the hippie “tribe,” and serving to provide delineations between character types, *Hair* is credited with being the first true “rock musical.”<sup>6</sup>

The goal of this study is to account for the role orchestration played in these earliest rock musicals, beginning with *Hair* in 1968 and progressing into the following decade, surveying seven other representative shows: *Promises, Promises* (1968), *Company* (1970), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1971), *Grease* (1972), *Pippin* (1972), *A Chorus Line* (1975), and *The Wiz* (1975). These scores included both a rock ensemble and instruments audiences traditionally expected in a pit, which are those one might see in a symphony orchestra, including a range of winds, brasses, strings, and percussion. The manners in which the orchestrators and arrangers used these colors had an impact on the audience, forging associations with particular sounds that augmented the efforts of the writers to inform the audience about plot and characters.

The role of the orchestrators and/or arrangers for Broadway shows is often understated or disregarded. Though musicals are collaborative processes that involve composers, directors, producers, and cast, and also the arrangers, choreographers, various designers, and stage crews, and while one person can potentially fill more than one role for a production, orchestration is a key element. Often, orchestration is one of the last steps in the total creative workshopping and rehearsal process. The finished score may not be available until the last possible moment, and even

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<sup>6</sup> Robert Simonson, “Playbill.com Picks Revisited: The Five Top Rock Musicals,” October 19, 2012, accessed from <http://www.playbill.com/article/playbillcom-picks-revisited-the-five-top-rock-musicals-of-all-time-com-198878>. Also see Scott Warfield, “From *Hair* to *Rent*: is ‘rock’ a four-letter word on Broadway?” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Musical* (Cambridge University Press, 2008) and Elizabeth Wollman, *The Theater Will Rock: A History of the Rock Musical from Hair to Hedwig* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006).



then, it may undergo further changes and developments based on larger changes to the show or subsequent legal restrictions. The profession requires flexibility and range, not only regarding meeting deadlines, but also in terms of meeting the expectations of other members of the creative team and creating an appropriate sonic palette.

Orchestrators are a necessary component of the process because they are expected to provide a score that will both support and enhance the plot, considering locales, character types, song styles, and time periods, among other concerns. They must also be cognizant of restrictions placed upon them, such as personnel requirements for each theater based on union contracts.<sup>7</sup> This necessitates a working relationship with technical members of the crew and legal practices as well as an inherent understanding of the show as a whole.

Composer and arranger Robert Russell Bennett, whose career ranged primarily from the 1910s through the 1960s, acknowledged that:

Another hazard of the *métier* is the art of scoring for voiceless voices. The operatic type of voice is far too hard-boiled to hold the sympathy of an American music comedy audience; they want youth, simplicity and tenderness rather than brilliance or “style.” This is all to the good except for the poor orchestras, who are obliged to learn a *pianissimo* on their instruments that has no precedent anywhere else. It is the orchestrator’s place to know exactly which of these and what combination of these instruments are at the moment within the exalted circle of the elect, i.e., capable of “playing under” the voice of the particular actor or actress who is to present the song of musical scene in question. This is perhaps the most difficult mechanical problem in the business...<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Catherine Mulder, *Unions and Class Transformation: The Case of the Broadway Musicians* (New York: Routledge Press, 2009).

<sup>8</sup>Robert Russell Bennett. “Orchestrating for Broadway” in *The Broadway Sound*, ed. George J. Ferencz (NY: University of Rochester Press, 1999), 280-81.

Orchestrators, then, must either have had musical training or an inherent understanding of the limitations that instruments and performers face, and reconcile those issues adequately. Their function extends beyond simply combining timbres into a pleasant or appropriate sound, but necessitates truly knowing how to use the tools at their disposal within the larger performing space.

Perhaps the most difficult part of an orchestrator's job is the limitation on one's time. As Steven Suskin points out:

In the musical theatre, there is simply no time for a composer — even a capable one! — to orchestrate his score. Broadway orchestrators need to be versatile and resourceful, and also quick. As deadlines loom, orchestration becomes a cramped and lonely work-through-the night occupation; sixteen-hour days (and more) are the norm. In the three-week period during which much of the orchestration is done, the composer's time and energy are more properly concentrated on rehearsals.<sup>9</sup>

This does not mean that all composers pass orchestrating duties to others, but most find it necessary to find a dependable orchestrator who can work with the written songs, and subsequently take notes to appropriately make alterations during the rehearsal process.

A necessary evil an effective orchestrator or arranger has to contend with are time constraints. Composer and arranger Luther Henderson noted:

Arrangers didn't come into play until it was necessary to produce a finished show in something less than four months. Opera composers could take a year or two to do their work. Musicals don't have that luxury. The composers are very busy in the last months writing new songs to replace the ones that don't seem to be pleasing to the tryout audiences, so somebody's got to help out. But it's more than just taking some of the burden off the composer's shoulders...Composing is a very closed operation, and you must use your materials with more economy than you would as an arranger. Once you have this kernel the composer has

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<sup>9</sup> Suskin, *The Sound of Broadway Music*, 176-77.

composed, as the other things emanate from it, it will never lose its identity.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, not only do Broadway orchestrators operate under a tight schedule, but they must also possess the ability to preserve the composer's original work while crafting a score.

Orchestration as an academic study offers an array of approaches in existing works, including evolution of ensembles, methods, and case studies of specific genres. Histories generally include the size and makeup of the orchestra at given points over time and the types of instrumentation often used by particular composers. These works rely less on examining how composers used the instruments they had in their arsenals. Guides typically focus on the approach to orchestrating pieces with a given ensemble, suggesting how to complete a piece using instruments in an expected manner. However, with no consistent approach to the study and no renowned works dedicated to the sole purpose of locating turning points in the history of orchestration and discussing their impact on what composers write, this type of study has few precedents.

Broadway orchestration, though not completely a new field, has been subjected to limited study in a way that involves the approach of marrying instruments with voices, plot, or actions, or focusing on the gradual introduction of popular instruments. Existing research includes lists of instruments utilized in a given production, particularly in Steven Suskin's work, and philosophical

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<sup>10</sup> Stephen Citron, *The Musical: From the Inside Out* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991), 249-250. Luther Henderson (1919-2003) was a Broadway performer and orchestrator, with such shows as *Purlie* (1970) and *Jelly's Last Jam* (1991) to his credit.

writings that describe the pit orchestra's function as an omniscient presence in Scott McMillin's book.<sup>11</sup>

For the purposes of this project, it is impossible to recreate the exact sound audiences heard in theaters or the experiences they had during the period of 1968-1975. Attending revivals as examples of shows may also prove problematic as changes to scoring, due to availability of musicians or technological advancements in the decades since, often have occurred. Therefore, it is necessary to refer to recordings of these productions, combined with conductor's or piano/vocal scores, to come as close as possible to describing the sound and function of the music within a certain scene.

This study is intended to serve a broader discussion of orchestration in three ways. First, a survey of the orchestrational landscape of Broadway during the late 1960s and early 1970s will add to our understanding during these years of significant change. This will aid in exploring how orchestrators came to include popular music ensembles into their pit orchestras. Second, an examination of the manner in which combinations of rock instruments and timbres support characterization and plot development within individual shows. Third, a contribution to orchestrational studies a work that focuses on a particular genre and connects methods of particular orchestrators to broader trends in the field.

## **Literature Review**

The available scholarship on orchestration is an elusive creature, mainly because, as mentioned previously, there is no one singular manner of, or approach to, writing on the subject.

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<sup>11</sup> Steven Suskin, *The Sound of Broadway Music*, and Scott McMillin, *The Musical as Drama: A Study of the Principles and Conventions Behind Musical Shows from Kern to Sondheim* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

This makes following trends in practices difficult. Some authors opt to focus on specific genres or time periods, usually discussing the instrumental breakdown of the ensemble, while others take a theoretical or practical approach, creating “how-to” guides for young composers and music students. While such manuals can prove useful to a basic degree, studying the approach of non-classically trained composers and their orchestrators, or those trained in popular music rather than classical, will not always align with the methods authors may describe.

Writings that center on tracing the development of the practice of orchestration tend to be older works from the first half of the twentieth century, while newer works take the aforementioned approaches of guidebooks or more focused studies. Though advertised as sources that examine developments of the practice itself, linear narratives on orchestration tend to describe the evolution of the symphony orchestra and which composers were or are associated with which ensemble. Historical works in general begin in brief around the late Renaissance as a starting point, quickly moving to targeting pivotal figures of the Baroque and Classical such as Handel and Haydn, who were creating when the orchestra was beginning to take shape, and proceeding through subsequent time periods, mentioning specific composers and their characteristic usages of the instruments and ensembles.

To discuss such an evolving practice, scholars cannot simply trace orchestration linearly, but must also take into account a host of other issues, such as political and social events that had impacts on artistic practices, instrumental developments, availability of players to a given composer or in a given ensemble, funding, notational practices, and increased experimentation with tone color and chromaticism. Such sub-topics are generally not addressed in sources or appear only peripherally.

In the foreword to composer Gardner Read's 1953 volume on orchestration, Aaron Copland writes: "Musical literature is signally lacking in up-to-date manuals of orchestral practice. Texts that describe the individual instruments are plentiful, of course, but only a few consider in any detail the subtle art of combining instruments..... It is a comment upon the present state of musical achievement in our country that this *Thesaurus of Orchestral Devices* should have been conceived and executed by an American composer and teacher."<sup>12</sup> While Copland's comment subtly praises work by a fellow American musician, he alludes to the problem facing musical academia that historical and philosophical writings on orchestration are lacking.

Read himself notes:

Nothing seems to date more quickly than an orchestration text-book. New instruments are added to the symphony orchestra, others become obsolete, ranges are extended, techniques improved and expanded — and one more tome on instrumentation becomes itself outmoded. It is a regrettable fact that at this time there is not in existence a single completely thorough, reliable, or up-to-date text on even the basic technique of orchestration, including the correct ranges for the standard instruments.<sup>13</sup>

For many available volumes and textbooks, this statement is accurate. The works explore the typical instruments found in an orchestra of the late Classical or early Romantic period, their typical ranges, any effects they can supply, and how—based on compositional masters of those eras—best to combine their timbres. Most works of this type do not take into account modifications made in the twentieth century, the rise of popular music and each genre's respective instrumental needs, or more experimental types of music, such as those requiring electronics. Those ideas seem to be woven into historical works whose primary aims are not to educate about orchestration.

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<sup>12</sup> Gardner Read, *Thesaurus of Orchestral Devices*. (New York: Pitman Publishing Corporation, 1953), vii.

<sup>13</sup> Read, *Thesaurus of Orchestral Devices*, 4.

Compilations or encyclopedias of instruments are among the most common sources on orchestration. Often these instrumental entries are absorbed into larger dictionaries or encyclopedias of music, and have been for several centuries. Perhaps the most notable encyclopedia of instruments is Berlioz's *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes*, in which he describes the various instruments of the orchestra, their general sound, and how they fit into a compositional scheme. Interestingly, Berlioz did make note of advancements being made during his lifetime, noting, for example, about the flute, "For a long period this instrument was most imperfect in many respects, but it is now, thanks to the skill of certain makers and to the method of manufacture adopted by Boehm following Gordon's discovery, as comprehensive, as accurate in tuning and as even in sound as one could wish. The same will soon be true, moreover, of the whole woodwind family."<sup>14</sup> Later encyclopedias and dictionaries of music that follow take the same overall approach of description and general roles, though the writing style differs depending on the intended audience, with simpler descriptions available for those directed toward children and more complex for those aimed at music students.

Ebenezer Prout capitalized on the work of Berlioz, because he felt, although existing treatises were excellent, there was a deficiency in English-language texts. His work has some elements of Berlioz in the description of the instruments and how they are most often used, but also includes less-frequently used instruments (such as the basset horn and serpent), common errors made by young composers and orchestrators, and tips for how to orchestrate, even under less-than-ideal circumstances, much like an instruction manual. Whereas later volumes cite basic theoretical knowledge as one of the keystones to orchestrating, Prout suggests characteristics such

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<sup>14</sup> Hector Berlioz, *Grand traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes*. English translation by Hugh Macdonald. (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 137.

as quickness of ear, imagination, the power to read from a score, and a working acquaintance with the instruments one may use.<sup>15</sup> This type of works aligns more so with Robert Russell Bennett's previously mentioned suggestions: a familiarity with a work and the resources at one's disposal. Unfortunately, this text stands out as the only one found during this review with this line of thinking, and, with a publication date in the 1870s, is hardly a modern source.

When texts do point to a specific timeline of orchestral events, the overall approach tends to be quite similar. After discussing the musical landscape at the end of the Renaissance and the precursors to modern instruments, scholars next move to the method of figured bass to discuss performance practice, and the prominence of string-based ensembles. Household records and some surviving music are used to help support their narrative, especially in reconstructing early opera orchestras, which likely varied performance to performance. The timeline progresses through when certain instruments became accepted members of the orchestra, which composers showcased these new additions, and historical figures that began to use instruments to create certain dramatic effects, such as Berlioz in *Symphonie fantastique*.

Focusing on the history of the practice, however, several scholars, including Adam Carse and Louis Adolphe Coerne, point to the late Renaissance period as the true starting point of orchestration, or instrumentation, as it is understood today. The reasoning for this choice is the idea of writing idiomatically for instruments, with evidence coming in the form of occasional labeled parts in the score or parts that appear suited for certain instruments popular at the time. Carse in particular points to the rise of secular music stemming from the Renaissance as a catalyst for increased demand for instrumental music, as well as developments in specific instruments,

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<sup>15</sup>Ebenezer Prout, *A Treatise on Instrumentation: A Practical Guide to Orchestration*. (Boston: Ditson, 1877), 7-9.



such as additional keys, and increased experimentation in compositional practices that offered parts independent of one another.<sup>16</sup> The idea of arranging idiomatically and practically for various instruments should be a strength of orchestrators in general, and with potential limitations in the pit, for Broadway arrangers in particular.

Much like a more general music history textbook, some orchestration histories tend to focus on a select group of composers and their works, among them Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Berlioz, Wagner, Brahms, and Tchaikovsky, as evidenced in Carse's *The History of Orchestration*. Carse does include other composers to make his points in addition to some relevant theoretical history as well, citing Praetorius's *Syntagma musicum* as a significant influence on how to fit certain instruments to certain chord members in a four-voice compositional framework.<sup>17</sup> And despite giving credit where credit is due, there exists a gap between the heavyweight canonic composers and more modern orchestrators that has not been completely closed.

Adolphe Coerne's work, *The Evolution of Modern Orchestration*, does discuss these major figures to shape his narrative, but includes less well-known contemporaries of the figures to demonstrate whether their approaches were novel or commonplace. Instead of more broad generalizations of practices, Coerne examines pieces by individual composers in order to explain their respective approaches. An interesting aspect of his work is that he also describes what some composers had to do to compensate for not having a particular instrument or sound that they desired, such as Rameau's lack of harp in a particular ensemble, for which he substituted violins

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<sup>16</sup> Adam Carse, *The History of Orchestration*. (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co, 1925), 1-2.

<sup>17</sup> Carse, *The History of Orchestration*, 33.

playing *pizzicato*.<sup>18</sup> These ideas of substitution do trickle down into Broadway practices to a degree, as instruments occasionally fill voids (by necessity or to provide a specific timbre).

Coerne delves farther into orchestrational practices across the time period, citing figures such as Hasse, Méhul, and Spontini. The purpose of including so much information was to trace the relationships between composers to see what influence, if any, previous composers had had on the younger generations, frequently pointing back to Beethoven and Wagner at regular intervals, as well as giving credit to composers cited as the first to employ specific instrumental effects, such as Méhul including low string effects as a dramatic device.<sup>19</sup> Coerne's book mentions specific works and the instruments employed, using a number of adjectives to describe the achieved sound, but less about what the instruments are actually being required to do. One particular method of orchestrating that Coerne does discuss is when a given composer requires an instrument to play notes out of its expected range, such as Tchaikovsky pushing the clarinets into their lower registers and the bassoons into their upper registers in his symphonic works, and the resulting sound.<sup>20</sup> Playing with timbres and allowing instruments to function as sound effects is a technique that has also been passed down into modern times and will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Cecil Forsyth also includes a chapter on classification of instruments, attempting to explain the divisions between instruments and provide a way to classify earlier known instruments, though he neglects history—both in regard to orchestration and the practice of classification—other than speculation about consideration given to earlier instruments. His system is focused solely on the manner of producing sound rather than any other aspect, stating:

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<sup>18</sup> Adolphe Louis Coerne, *The Evolution of Modern Orchestration*. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1908), 36.

<sup>19</sup> Coerne, *The Evolution of Modern Orchestration*, 61.

<sup>20</sup> Coerne, *The Evolution of Modern Orchestration*, 156.

A classification, however, is necessary, and this is only to be found by neglecting the unessential in the instrument. In other words, we must leave out of account its varied forms and the materials of which it is constructed. We must strip it of the complex mass of silver-smithery and brass-smithery in which it is nowadays often embedded. We must come down to essentials.<sup>21</sup>

This system is briefly mentioned in subsequent discussions of the instruments, but its relative importance is explored no further and non-Western instruments are not taken into account. A discussion of instrument groupings is full of possibilities for further ties into a larger examination of orchestration; however, Forsyth does not pursue such an avenue.

Something that makes Forsyth's work stand apart from other similar discussions of instruments is that, in dealing with each individual instrument, he not only describes the manner in which it is played, but any other accoutrement the player needs, and the typical manner in which the player actually sees or reads his music. He includes discussions of reed types and mutes for clarity. Forsyth also provides feedback about how to write for particular instruments, such as for the side-drum: "In writing side-drum parts, remember 1) That you will always have a tendency to write too few, not too many notes. 2) That the genius of the instrument is totally opposed to single detached notes. In fact, they should never be written. 3) That the drag and the flam are only technical ways of accenting effectively a single beat...etc."<sup>22</sup> This type of feedback, while the work is, again, dated, has probably proven useful to later orchestrators.

The overarching problem with these sources is not quality, but rather, age. Ranging from the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, the worldview since then is quite different. New styles, instruments, and equipment can now be used, with many of the same introduced

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<sup>21</sup> Cecil Forsyth, *Orchestration* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1925), 14.

<sup>22</sup> Forsyth, *Orchestration*, 26-27.

principles and suggestions applied. And because orchestration as a study is not as long-standing as other musical fields, there appears to have been no agreement in how to collectively speak or write about the discipline.

More recent works on orchestration focus on histories within specific periods or genres. For example, a survey of the orchestra during the Classical Era includes typical instrumental members, expected combinations of timbres, and notable composers who exemplified the then-current practices. More modern genres, including film and theater studies, are popular, and tend to focus on the biographies of specific composers, orchestrators and arrangers, though in the case of film studies, a brief survey of the shift from silent films to talkies is usually incorporated. This is more technical, hinging on how sound is actually created, rather than the move from a live pianist or orchestra to pre-recorded music. Discussions then move toward how a composer or arranger combines instruments to suggest a specific time or place or uses specific techniques to invoke a mood or emotion for a given scene. Examples of these ideas are the use of a swing band to convey to the audience the temporal setting of the 1930s, or the use of *tremolos* in the low strings to convey a sense of impending danger, a technique also used in theatrical productions. Though not always a directly addressed method of how film composers orchestrate, the importance of choosing appropriate instrumental combinations is highlighted, with Franz Waxman noting, “The tone color alone of the instrument will determine the acquired mood...I believe the first and foremost principle of good scoring is the color of orchestration. The melody is only secondary.”<sup>23</sup>

Joseph Wagner points out about orchestration:

It calls for a thorough working knowledge of theoretical music subjects (harmony, counterpoint, form, etc.) and an equally comprehensive

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<sup>23</sup> Tony Thomas, ed., *Film Score: The View from the Podium*. (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1979), 54-55.

understanding of the characteristics and peculiarities of all the various instruments employed in the contemporary symphony orchestra. Such matters as tonal range, technical capacities, combination possibilities, as well as the various tonal limitations, strengths, and weaknesses of each instrument, form an essential part of every orchestrator's technique.<sup>24</sup>

Most of the books on orchestration include this piece of advice. In books designed as instruction manuals, there is typically included a review of theoretical concepts, which return as the members of an orchestra are discussed, such as chords and their inversions and the most effective way to voice a given chord.

Practical guides to orchestration also often discuss some elements of history, but without much detail, focusing instead on the orchestra of the late Classical period forward, much like overarching histories, mentioning modifications in passing, and several select composers that helped to develop the ensemble or that showcased particular instruments. Rather than trace the development of instruments from their earliest known counterpoints, their focus is primarily theoretical, choosing to discuss the timbres and techniques of modern instruments and popular combinations of those instruments or typical patterns used to create a specific sound. These discussions are often followed by an applied section of the book, where students progress through exercises designed to mimic standard orchestrational practices or re-arrange famous instrumental works.

However, these guides do suggest that budding composers, arrangers, and orchestrators study the development and history of the orchestra. This is in case that if they are required to sound like a specific composer, they can accurately imitate them by using their characteristic instrumentations and combinations of colors. Some that include advice on arranging or scoring for

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<sup>24</sup> Joseph Wagner, *Orchestration: A Practical Handbook*. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959), 2.

stage and screen likewise suggest a good working historical knowledge in order to draw on aspects of styles from various eras when needed.

Some more recent texts do take into consideration the advancements made in the twentieth century and their effects on how music was or is written and orchestrated, exploring aleatoric practices and electronic music as well as studies in acoustics. Stephen Burton's text even ventures into pop music and the use of some unexpected instruments, such as George Harrison's inclusion of traditional Indian instruments in the Beatles' later songs. He likewise adds a chapter on new notational practices, looking at multiphonics and quarter-tones. Though this book is intended primarily to discuss the application of orchestrational ideas, Burton does incorporate some historical asides, such as Respighi's use of the phonograph in *Pines of Rome* in 1924 and the impact of recorded sound on composition and instrumentation.<sup>25</sup>

Other more recent texts also include sections on how to re-orchestrate when moving between types of ensembles, such as a wind band transcription of a standard orchestral piece. This includes tips on how to extract individual parts and what instrument types would be best to replace others. Similarly, some offer advice on how to move from a piano piece to a larger ensemble, suggesting taking certain aspects such as register, chord positions, and tone color, into consideration.

Bernard Rogers includes a chapter on arranging in his book, *The Art of Orchestration*, which looks not only at arranging orchestral works for other combinations, but piano music and even cross-ensemble music, completely re-orchestrating with the same voices or between two

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<sup>25</sup>Stephen Douglas Burton, *Orchestration*. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1982), 476.

ensembles that have many instruments in common.<sup>26</sup> While an orchestrator must consider many musical elements, such as texture, timbre, range, register, etc., Rogers states they must also take the aspect of style into consideration, especially since certain eras or genres do not always necessitate the same combination of instruments or tone colors.

The available literature, then, has many positive aspects and many lacunae. Advice on the practice can be gleaned, a rough history can be estimated, and methods can be discerned; however, an intimate look at those who make orchestrating and arranging their livelihood is unable to be found, save piecing together information from biographies and genre studies.

For Broadway orchestration, Steven Suskin's *The Sound of Broadway Music: A Book of Orchestrators and Orchestrations* is, at present, the most comprehensive text, surveying a number of pit lists for prominent shows, notable biographies, and sectional explanations on the expectations and musical elements orchestrators must reconcile. While unquestionably the most useful book for this study, the function of the orchestration in a given show is only hinted at, and the shows cited are earlier, the book ending with the early 1970s.<sup>27</sup>

Though there is quite a lot of scholarship on orchestration and several tomes are repeatedly cited for their perceived thorough addressing of the subject, it remains a problematic field. Many of the histories tend to veer off from the subject at hand and provide a list of composers working in a specific era and place with the attribution that their orchestrations were pivotal and well-received, but the way that they actually used the orchestra is barely described. Likewise, the books

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<sup>26</sup> Bernard Rogers, *The Art of Orchestration; Principles of Tone Color in Modern Scoring* (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1951).

<sup>27</sup> See also Craig Zadan, *Sondheim & Co.*; Paul Laird, *Wicked: A Musical Biography* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011); Scott McMillin, *The Musical as Drama*; and George J. Ferencz, ed., *The Broadway Sound*, as these resources also devote some discussion to orchestration in the theater.

that address how one goes about orchestrating or arranging tend to leave out well-rounded histories in favor of moving straight into the theoretical. Perhaps the biggest concern in tracing the scholarship of orchestration is that there is no one standard way to approach the topic. Having options of histories, guides, more focused studies, and encyclopedias, however, offers a range of approaches to the subject. Summarily, texts on orchestration differ in their intent and their application. While all have their respective merits, it is difficult to trace a specific methodology in the field. It is furthermore problematic to discover much about turning points in the art, other than they simply occurred.

### **Purpose of Study**

Because Broadway musicals are a prominent type of artistic and commercial entertainment, especially in times of cinematic releases and social media, their histories must be preserved. Orchestration, which has traditionally been an unwieldy field more generally and only moderately studied for the theater, and which plays a major role in establishing a show's soundscape, deserves scholarly attention. Since all art forms develop through borrowing elements from predecessors and adding in new methods over time, focusing on a specific selection of years and acknowledging what came before and what came after is likewise important.

Orchestrators, too, deserve to be analyzed in the same manner as the composers of Broadway shows. While scholarly studies of classical composers address their use of instrumentation, studies of more recent composers leave this component out, though a review of a show may praise its "lush/experimental score." Giving credit to those who take the seeds of ideas that composers produce and develop them into such recognizable scores is not only necessary, it is fair. Unfortunately, given that the orchestrators do not receive top billing in productions,



information on several figures is scarce, and some orchestrators have not survived or did not have careers extensive enough to be studied thoroughly for this project.

With the prevalence of rock music emerging in the mid-century and its continued influence, studying the early years of rock on Broadway and the impact of the sound on the shows and audience is important not only to theatrical studies, but also popular music studies, orchestration studies, and more general musical history.

### **The Musical Landscape**

The late 1960s and early 1970s were eclectic years for music. A bevy of styles were popular with audiences, made available through commercial recordings, including classical, country, and jazz. Rock and roll was firmly established by this point, and subgenres began to branch out. Artists came to be aligned with specific genres, and certain minute fluctuations in performance or delivery differentiated the styles. Because performers and individual songs—including the Beatles, etc.—became worldwide phenomena, references made to these pieces and people were not lost on audiences at the time. Over the course of this project, individual styles of rock will be expounded upon as necessary, pertaining to the show at hand.

### **Categories of Rock Musicals**

Scott Warfield, in his article, “Is ‘rock’ a four-letter word on Broadway?” divided rock musicals into four distinct categories.

1. Musicals that are conveyed as “rock” musical by their creative team. An example would be *Hair: A Tribal Love-Rock Musical*.

2. Musicals whose scores are unquestionably written with rock in mind and that began their existence as concept albums. An example would be *Jesus Christ Superstar*.
3. Musicals that contain signifiers of rock music, whether on the whole or just in part. An example would be *Company*.
4. Musicals that harken to earlier rock ‘n’ roll styles as an indicator of nostalgia. An example would be *Grease*.<sup>28</sup>

I would like to expand on Warfield’s third category for the sake of this study, looking to musicals whose primary orchestrational sense is not rooted in rock, and the styles may range from classical to vaudeville to jazz to pop, though rock does make minimal appearances. I include this category for a show like *Pippin*, where the music is a patchwork of styles, as well as other shows which on the surface do not seem to invite the label of “rock musical,” despite sparing use of rock characteristics, allowing them to be acknowledged. I also include this expansion to later allow for discussion of more recent productions, such as *Something Rotten* (2015) and *Hamilton* (2015), that, like *Pippin*, are set in the past and display a wide approach to styles.

While these categories offer additional ease in describing the shows to follow, they similarly allow for overlap. The score of *Hair*, for example, permits it to fall into the second category, and the subtitle to *Jesus Christ Superstar*, “a rock opera,” also allows it to fall into the first. For this project, the category for each show will be addressed to give immediate perspective for the reader, using the numbering system provided above.

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<sup>28</sup> Scott Warfield, “From *Hair* to *Rent*: is ‘rock’ a four-letter word on Broadway?,” 236.

## **Methodology**

A lack of precedent does affect the methodology for this study. Aspects of the discussions on character of instruments, practical applications of sound, and historical narratives will be considered to place a shows' music into as much predetermined context as possible. In addition, direct references to other works, songs, or composers will similarly be discussed to demonstrate subliminal parallels made by the showcased orchestrators.

This work will examine eight shows that represent combinations of different composers and different orchestrators, with only one figure, Jonathan Tunick, recurring prominently. In addition to surveying the individual creative teams' biographies, shows, and the music, extra-musical elements, such as major socio-political events and technological advancements, will be considered to effectively contextualize the sounds of the shows. The shows in question include: *Hair* (1968), *Promises, Promises* (1968), *Company* (1970), *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1971), *Grease* (1972), *Pippin* (1972), *A Chorus Line* (1975), and *The Wiz* (1975).

The construction of each chapter will first include biographical information on the composers and orchestrators (with additional information concerning the lyricists, directors, and producers as applicable) and the shows more broadly. Since some orchestrators received formal musical education and some came to the theater from a predominantly rock background, this will serve in providing an understanding of how previous experiences with rock music might have influenced their work. The material for these sections have come from an array of sources, including biographies, program notes, reviews, obituaries, web sites, interviews, and general studies of musical theater.

The musical styles for each show vary according to the genres necessary to support the plot or characters. No two shows are drawn from the same, or even similar, source materials. The productions also take place in disparate times and in different locations, further necessitating some musical differentiation. This gamut of subject matter allows for a wide examination of approaches.

Due to a lack of available materials, particularly orchestral scores, recreations have been made for study through a marriage of pit personnel lists, original cast recordings, and piano/vocal scores. As the primary aim is a discussion of characterization with the aid of orchestrational choices, how the orchestra describes and supports the characters will be surveyed, along with their respective instrumentation, and the associations that a given combination of timbres evokes.

As the pits in these shows involve both rock and non-rock instrumentation, a clarification of terminology must also be made. For the group of instruments that includes electric guitar, electric bass, keyboards, and drum kit, the description will be “rock instruments.” This may at times also include some brasses (especially trumpet and trombone) and saxophones, if their purpose is to emulate a specific popular style, though then a distinction will be made. Strings (violins, violas, cellos, basses), winds (flute, clarinet, oboe, saxophones, and bassoon, along with their auxiliary instruments), brasses (trumpets, French horn, trombone, and tuba), and percussion (pitched and non-pitched, disregarding drum kit) will be referred to as “orchestral” or “traditional” instruments, due to their long-standing membership in the orchestra and chamber ensembles. An appendix will also include the breakdown of instruments for reference.

As the characters and scores are being discussed, several other factors will be included. The character’s role in the plot is essential. If a character is good, certain orchestrational approaches are often taken, borrowed from preceding practices, as outlined in the sources

described above. If a character is an antagonist, certain timbral expectations are similarly required. Specific instruments are associated with particular qualities, as outlined by many instrumental dictionaries and histories, and certain popular genres are associated with a specific type of listener or artist. Thus, despite the fact that many books on the subject of orchestration may be considered dated, they are some form of a precedent, and their available information is still applicable.

In addition, then-current events and performing artists will be discussed as necessary. As the 1960s and 1970s were a time of civil and racial unrest, musicals could include elements of these issues or react against them. *Hair* and *The Wiz*, for example, both consider race in their treatment of material, but do so in differing ways. *Grease* is an homage to the 1950s, working backward past certain events, evoking nostalgia for the audience. *Promises, Promises*, *A Chorus Line*, *Company*, and *Jesus Christ Superstar* address social divisions in differing, and occasionally masked, ways. *Pippin* considers a number of issues, including war, which was a lingering issue at the time of its staging. To provoke the audience into having a certain reaction to a character or plot point, direct correlations to a given artist or popular song are woven into several scores.

To understand the impact these shows had, or the message the creative team was trying to convey, requires some interdisciplinary consideration. The styles of music or the instrumentation associated with socio-political ideals, or music included in an ironic fashion, must be taken into account. The source material for a production's central plot is also necessary in discussing music, as, while some shows are derived from literature, some from history, and some newly written, how and why certain styles are included may play off or against the subject matter that the audience knows.

For each chapter, following a biography of the creative team, a synopsis of the show, and an explanation of the orchestrational approach, pertinent musical examples will be included. Given restrictions placed on this study due to availability of physical scores, track listings and time indices appear to make the necessary connections. Recordings similarly present problems, as, while these shows were recorded in a time of developments in making studio albums, some shows built the tracks in layers, rather than as a composite sound.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> John S. Wilson, "'The Wiz' Is Not a Subtle Soul," *The New York Times*, June 1, 1975. The reviewer notes that, rather than recording the cast album in one day, as was typical, the process took several days, and tracks were built part by part, much like popular songs.

## **Chapter 1: *Hair***

“My main objection to musicals these days is that people have lost faith in music – they don’t really believe that music is what people want to hear. I think people really like to hear songs, and in that case you have to forget about the book...There’s nothing wrong with a book, but if the music doesn’t carry a musical, it’s just a play with music.” –Galt MacDermot<sup>1</sup>

Theatrical composers and orchestrators had drawn on popular musical styles for scores prior to the 1968 Broadway premiere of *Hair*, including the songs of Tin Pan Alley and various forms of jazz, but for the most part these styles had been employed using a traditional orchestra pit with a few additional instruments for color. This can be seen by considering early rock and roll of the 1950s and the instruments that defined that era for *Bye Bye Birdie* (1960). In that show, the music, supplemented by saxophones and guitar, served to mimic the time period during which Elvis Presley was enlisting in the army, with Presley reinvented in the character of Conrad Birdie. Outside of the rock flavor evoked in the songs for that character, the score remained primarily rooted in the past.

However, by the mid-1960s, rock ‘n’ roll on the radio and in concerts was not as topically subtle as it had been in earlier years and often became an avenue to make larger, frequently political or social, assertions. Subjects such as sex, although a popular topic of songs for centuries — despite often being buried under euphemisms — were being covertly or overtly discussed, heard in such songs as “Twist and Shout” (1962, by the Isley Brothers, and a year later by The Beatles). The struggles of social equality and war were addressed in songs such as “For What It’s Worth” by

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Berkvist, “He Put Hair on Broadway’s Chest,” *The New York Times*, May 11, 1969.

Buffalo Springfield in 1967 and “The Sounds of Silence” by Simon and Garfunkel in 1966.<sup>2</sup> With Americans becoming increasingly involved in international conflicts including Vietnam and civil rights battles at home in the United States, many popular musicians intended to use their songs as a platform to protest or to convey their feelings about society and life. Scholars often conceive of the 1960s as the decade when the younger generations began to become disillusioned with tradition and unwavering loyalty to government and country.

1968, the year of *Hair*’s Broadway premiere, produced an especially high number of shattering events, including the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, generating a number of civilian casualties, and the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy.<sup>3</sup> Compounding these developments even further was the fact that news coverage was widespread, and Americans could bear witness to carnage, particularly in Vietnam. Loss of life for reasons that were hard to fathom led many people to a greater distrust of governmental leadership and to challenge the idea of troops fighting such unpopular wars. The musical draws inspiration from these ideas, among many others.

Race and integration were divisive topics during the 1960s. Several events, including the aforementioned assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., the march from Selma to Montgomery in Alabama in an effort to procure voting rights in 1965, the Biloxi Wade-Ins to protest segregated beaches in Mississippi, the assassination of Medgar Evers, overturning anti-miscegenation laws, and ongoing court cases regarding segregation in public schools, took center stage. The feelings about violence and civil unrest during this time were captured in a number of popular songs,

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<sup>2</sup> “The Sounds of Silence” was reportedly not written about the war, according to the performers, but the lyrics invited interpretation of an anti-war message by both critics and listeners.

<sup>3</sup> Prior to the Tet Offensive, the North Vietnamese launched a number of attacks on American troops in late 1967.



including “Eve of Destruction” (1965) by Barry McGuire and later the Turtles, which makes indirect references to a sampling of events, including the Selma marches, the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, and the draft age.<sup>4</sup> *Hair* tackled race in part by not directly reacting to then-current events, but looking back farther in time to President Lincoln; it included black performers in the cast, not widespread at the time, and treated racial slurs with humorous contempt.

The 1960s was also the decade in which drug use became an increasingly prevalent social activity, especially following Timothy Leary’s widely-publicized research on psychedelics and their potential effects.<sup>5</sup> Often, users of various substances claimed drugs should be used only to expand the mind, causing them to experience a new level of consciousness they would not otherwise be able to attain without the aid of those substances. With the advent of electronic capabilities for instruments, such as distortion pedals, musicians could produce sounds that for some suggested drug-induced states. The electric guitar had become integral to the rock sound, having first been an experiment in amplification by big band musicians in the 1930s, and the electric bass was in wider use after Leo Fender’s work in the early 1950s. In addition to the amplified sound alone, musicians likewise had access to other devices or techniques to control and manipulate the sounds that were being emitted from their instruments; this “twangy,” bent sound was often a sonic marker for increased states of consciousness. This approach can be seen in the later, Eastern-inspired music of the Beatles’ “Norwegian Wood” (1965), Jefferson Airplane’s “White Rabbit” (1967), and Steppenwolf’s “Magic Carpet Ride” (1968). In addition to the musical aspect of these songs, the lyrical content directly or indirectly refers to sex or drugs.

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<sup>4</sup> The song has been recorded by numerous artists over the years, and is perceived as reacting to the global events of the time of its original release.

<sup>5</sup> Leary was named the “most dangerous man in America” by Richard Nixon for his advocacy of LSD, and is responsible for the quote “turn on, tune in, drop out.” These two ideas come into play in several numbers in *Hair*.

The counterculture of the decade developed out of not only a reaction to the war, race, and drugs, but also a perceived materialism of the previous generation. The largest countercultural group, labeled as “hippies,” promoted the ideas of peace, love, environmentalism, and a certain sense of brotherhood, with the highest populations of these groups located in Greenwich Village and San Francisco. Hippies, due to many indulging in drug use, were aligned with psychedelia, manifesting in both visual and musical art, and the subculture was broadly reported to engage in free love and to display their bodies openly. In line with the culture around which *Hair* is built, open relationships, interracial relationships, and nudity are included in the show.<sup>6</sup>

Events and social mores among many of the younger generation in the 1960s, therefore, allowed for experimentation with sensitive topics and fresh sounds in the theater. *Hair* is traditionally cited as the first true rock musical, made memorable by its music, its capture of a very specific piece of Americana, and its frankness.<sup>7</sup> In addition to being impactful in the realm of theatrical productions, it is also the first rock-based show that boasted hits on the popular song charts during and after its initial staging, further solidifying its acceptance as an example of rock music.

The music of *Hair* is quite diverse in terms of style, in spite of being labeled as a rock musical, although the rock ensemble itself provides the majority of the music. As such, the show can be categorized using Scott Warfield’s criteria for his second grouping of musicals, as a show

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<sup>6</sup> The nude scene in *Hair* was, and to an extent, still is, one of the more controversial elements of the show. So much so that in April of 1970, the Boston run of the musical closed simply due to such subject matter, along with burning the American flag. Guy Livingston, “Nudity and Flag ‘Desecration’ Figure in Appeal Against *Hair* Foldo in Hub,” *Variety*, April 15, 1970.

<sup>7</sup> While this is generally accepted, it is also worth noting that the show was preceded on Broadway by *Viet Rock* (1966), a similarly-themed production with rock music. Its history is similar to *Hair*’s in its development at the LaMama theater and its inclusion of Gerome Ragni in the process. However, whereas *Hair* had a long run on Broadway, *Viet Rock* closed after approximately 62 performances.

rooted firmly in rock traditions.<sup>8</sup> As the first successful show of this kind, it might also be considered as the template for this category.

In order to address how the music and instrumental choices fit into the conversation for this work, a few specific elements will be explored. This includes a discussion of the song “Aquarius” and its orchestration in more detail, as indicative of the mindsets and practices of the counterculture, as well as being a stand-alone hit on the popular music charts. Musical representations of drug usage, free love, race, and the war itself will also be considered in detail, with particular attention paid to the instrumental combinations used to evoke certain associations. In addition to considering these elements individually, the impact of the show as the first accepted and successful rock musical will be examined.

### **The Creative Team**

In the 1960s, James Rado and Gerome Ragni were young experimental theater enthusiasts looking for inspiration, which they found in Greenwich Village in New York City, a well-known hippie residence and arts district. Ragni had previously participated in a workshop of a musical known as *Viet Rock*, which partially encouraged him to pursue staging a rock musical centered on the hippie lifestyle and reaction to the Vietnam War.<sup>9</sup> Joining their team was a Canadian composer, Galt MacDermot, who had been introduced to the two by Off-Broadway producer Eric Blau.<sup>10</sup> Combining stories and attitudes about life that they recorded during their time in the Village with their own thoughts on life and politics, Rado and Ragni produced the earliest drafts of what would later become *Hair*.

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<sup>8</sup> Please see Introduction, pages 20-21.

<sup>9</sup> Barbara Lee Horn, *The Age of Hair* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 24.

<sup>10</sup> Horn, *The Age of Hair*, 24.

Gerome Ragni (1935-1991), a native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, began acting in high school, and eventually won the Barter Theatre Award for outstanding young actor in 1963.<sup>11</sup> Prior to working on *Hair*, Ragni performed in several On- and Off-Broadway shows, including *Hamlet* with Richard Burton, *Hang Down Your Head and Die*, and *Viet Rock*. His partnerships with Rado and MacDermot ultimately proved lasting, as the three attempted another production, entitled *Sun*, which was never produced, and he collaborated with MacDermot on the critical and commercial failure *Dude*.<sup>12</sup>

James Rado (b. 1932), a native of Washington, D.C., had a strong background in writing for the stage. As a student at the University of Maryland, he participated in several student productions in both onstage and offstage capacities, honing skills that he would use later in his career. Like Ragni, Rado's earliest exposure to professional theater came as an actor, performing in plays on Broadway, such as *Marathon '33* and *A Lion in Winter* as Richard the Lionhearted.<sup>13</sup> However, in addition to being onstage, he acknowledged he wanted to be part of a creative team for a show, stating, "That's where my heart lay creatively...that was the ultimate to me."<sup>14</sup>

The two performers met while working on that Off-Broadway production of *Hang Down Your Head and Die*, a show that only ran for one night. Despite this, Rado and Ragni quickly became friends and decided to collaborate on a production inspired by their observations of the hippie culture. Renting an apartment in Hoboken together, the pair worked and drafted their project, taking other jobs and touring opportunities in the interim. Once finished, the controversial

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<sup>11</sup> The Barter Theatre is located in Abingdon, Virginia.

<sup>12</sup> Richard F. Shepard, "Gerome Ragni, 48, a Stage Actor; Co-Author of Broadway's *Hair*," *The New York Times*, July 13, 1991. Though the *New York Times* listed Ragni's age at death as 48, he was actually 55.

<sup>13</sup> "James Rado," *The Internet Broadway Database*, accessed from <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-cast-staff/james-rado-6628>. Accessed July 8, 2015.

<sup>14</sup> Sheela Lambert, "The Man Behind the Hair," *Advocate*, August 13, 2008.

script was a hard sell, and it was only a chance meeting with director and producer Joseph Papp (1921-1991) on a train from Yale, where Papp was teaching and Ragni was performing, that finally gained them a foot in the stage door.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to writing the script, Rado and Ragni were also members of the cast for a long portion of the show's initial run, playing Berger and Claude, respectively, characters that they based in part on their own relationship. However, the two were temporarily barred from participating in the production by the producer, Michael Butler, for "objectionable behavior on stage."<sup>16</sup> Rado has stated in interviews that he and Ragni proceeded down the aisle of the Biltmore Theater nude during one performance without warning, and that guards were stationed to bar them from recreating that moment during the very next performance.<sup>17</sup>

Early versions and sequences of the show were staged at New York's La MaMa Experimental Theater. The theater was founded in 1961 by Ellen Stewart, who provided free rehearsal and performing space for new works.<sup>18</sup> At La Mama, the show was treated as a more interactive experience between the audience and the cast, and spectators were invited to participate in a hippie "be-in."<sup>19</sup> The theater had a reputation for staging controversial, subversive productions; a show that focused on hippies and their issues with the government, including overtly denouncing the war and protesting, was an apt choice to include in its season. Prior to intermission, "police" would invade the theater, citing disrupting the peace and spurring on rebellion as cause

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<sup>15</sup> Lambert, "The Man Behind the Hair."

<sup>16</sup> Shepard, "Gerome Ragni."

<sup>17</sup> Lambert, "The Man Behind the Hair."

<sup>18</sup> LaMama Theater Mission Statement, lamama.org, accessed August 4, 2015. The theater began as a basement space for developing works, and in the decades since its inception has occupied a sequence of multi-purpose buildings.

<sup>19</sup> This was treated like a communal gathering that was held in San Francisco in 1967, where members of the hippie community met to celebrate their ideals.

to arrest the participants. While this stunt was preplanned, the intention of showing the audience what they considered a typical and traditional reaction to the hippie lifestyle was poignant and audience members occasionally believed they were truly on the verge of being arrested.

Galt MacDermot (b. 1928), who studied both composition and organ at the University of Capetown, was initially interested primarily in a career in jazz, but he was open to a variety of styles. This was due in part to his family's move to South Africa around 1950 for his father's job, where the musician gained exposure to many different styles and genres. MacDermot took note of the music being played locally and recognized a similarity to rock music in the rhythms employed for dance music.<sup>20</sup> He parlayed these rhythmic ideas, along with those of the cha-cha, which he also associated with rock-and-roll patterns, into some of his more popular scores.

After being introduced to Rado and Ragni, MacDermot considered their idea for a show and, while initially skeptical, signed on to write the score. Regarding his hesitation, he has said: "Not just because of the nudity, but the whole thing — the lack of a real story, the lack of an ordinary book, the endless rock and roll, which I didn't think anybody could take. You know, theatergoers don't really like rock and roll..."<sup>21</sup> After joining the creative team, MacDermot crafted the beginnings of a working score in close to two or three weeks so that hopeful producer Joseph Papp could be given an idea of what he would be backing.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Robert Berkvist, "He Put 'Hair' on Broadway's Chest." In an interview with the author, MacDermot stated about the music in South Africa: "They'd be playing what was, really, rock and roll. What they called quaylas—like a South African version of High Life—very characteristic beat, very similar to rock. Much deeper, though, much more to it. It's just got a *fantastic* feel to it. Africans, when they get a beat going, it's just something. You don't hear it anywhere else."

<sup>21</sup> Berkvist, "He Put 'Hair' on Broadway's Chest."

<sup>22</sup> Berkvist, "He Put 'Hair' on Broadway's Chest."

Director Tom O'Horgan (1924-2009) was included in the creative team because of his background with experimental theater. Originally from Chicago, his earliest performing experiences were in houses of worship, before joining the Second City troupe, developing improvisational skills, and then spending some time performing in nightclubs. Upon moving to the East Side and working in new productions, he caught the attention of Ellen Stewart. She had been hoping to allow up-and-coming playwrights (including Sam Shepard), to gain some traction in New York, and posited that if new works were published in Europe they were more likely to be accepted in the United States. She sent two teams of directors and playwrights to France and Denmark, respectively. O'Horgan's conceptual approach was well-received in Denmark, and gained him some notoriety in New York.<sup>23</sup>

Part of O'Horgan's approach was based on the idea of extending the action out into the audience so that they were constantly aware of their surroundings. This necessitated that his directions changed during the move from the Anspacher—where the show had premiered—to the Biltmore Theater, where a more open and inviting space was traded for a proscenium. O'Horgan was also interested in the ancient Greek tradition of music, dance, and drama being equal in a theatrical performance, and the idea that focus on words alone was a byproduct of the nineteenth century. As such, he conceived of *Hair* much in the same way as a *Singspiel*, where the words still bore importance, but were less overwhelming than the other performative elements.<sup>24</sup> *Hair* further appealed to him with its potential to rattle some of the viewers with its frank address of controversial topics, especially sex. In an interview with *The New York Times*, O'Horgan commented that his true objective was:

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<sup>23</sup> Elenore Lester, "Of Course, There Were Some Limits," *The New York Times*, May 19, 1968.

<sup>24</sup> Lester, "Of Course, There Were Some Limits."

...just getting the vicarious joy of turning people on, making them *respond*, turning them on to their own sensual powers that are buried under layers of cement. When you see how people in the street will run to see a fire or an accident or a fight, hoping against hope to see something really *happen*, something that will prove that the people walking beside them are more than mere manikins, you realize how much they want to break out of all their emotional rigidity.<sup>25</sup>

With a creative team approaching the subject matter from multiple perspectives, including pushing the audience to the edges of their comfort zones, the show gained additional momentum. Rado and Ragni brought in performance experience as well as that of the hippie lifestyle, MacDermot provided an eclectic musical background, and O'Horgan contributed a spatial concept.

Before transferring to Broadway in 1968, *Hair* enjoyed an Off-Broadway existence, premiering first as part of the Shakespeare Festival located in the Anspacher Theater. At the time of the festival premiere, the show received its first review in the *New York Times* by Clive Barnes. He remarked that there was a lack of a central plot to the show; however, the show was also “an honest attempt to jolt the American musical into the nineteen-sixties, and a musical that is trying to relate to something other than Sigmund Romberg.”<sup>26</sup> He further complimented the music in the production for providing enough that was familiar to satisfy viewers who were accustomed to earlier styles, but modern enough to appeal to a youth demographic.

Between the Shakespeare festival and Broadway premiere, Barnes received a number of letters from those present in the audience for the previews, imploring him to “warn” attendees of

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<sup>25</sup> Lester, “Of Course, There Were Some Limits.”

<sup>26</sup> Clive Barnes, “The Theater: ‘Hair,’ a Love-Rock Musical, Inaugurates Shakespeare Festival’s Anspacher Playhouse: Contemporary Youth Depicted in Play,” *The New York Times*, October 30, 1967.



what they might experience upon seeing *Hair*. Barnes advised patrons of an abundance of four-letter words, sex, nudity, unexpected interactions with the American flag, and drug use.<sup>27</sup>

### **Synopsis**

*Hair* tells the story of Claude Bukowski, a young man who becomes acquainted with a “tribe” of hippies in New York just before receiving his draft notice to serve with the army in Vietnam. The tribe includes a mix of ethnicities and socio-cultural backgrounds, and the members are depicted as being bound by loyalty to one another. Depictions of recognizable, historical American figures, such as Abraham Lincoln, are juxtaposed against extremely rebellious acts, such as burning draft notices. Divisions between generations are similarly marked by humorously warped depictions of adults working against the hippie tribe, whose members are portrayed as more enlightened and philosophical. Adult characters, introduced as “1948” to further widen the generation gap, even query, “What have you got, 1968, that makes you so damned superior?” The tribe then unpacks their ideals to counter that question. Terminology aligned with Leary and Eastern philosophy, including the *Kama Sutra*, is also employed throughout the show.

Claude is also involved in a love triangle with tribe members Sheila and Berger, while another girl, Jeanie, pines after him, though her love explicitly is unrequited. Jeanie is also unmarried and pregnant, and admits she is unclear about her child’s paternity, though her goal is still to be with Claude. Claude, meanwhile, eventually honors his draft notice, becoming a casualty of the war while the other tribe members make an attempt to locate him, seemingly unaware of his fate. Though the musical’s overall story is loosely constructed, the intention at the time of its

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<sup>27</sup> Clive Barnes, “Theater: “Hair”-It’s Fresh and Frank: Likeable Rock Musical Moves to Broadway,” *The New York Times*, April 30, 1968.

original staging was to provoke the audience members into thinking about their stance on contemporary issues.

*Hair* is often credited as a pivotal show in the musical theater canon for its gritty outlook on, and unabashed reaction to, events and behaviors of the day. These components are explored frankly; however, the musical content supplies another vital component that serves to support these aspects. The instrumentation alone often serves to create an atmosphere of haziness as well as definitively mark the show's setting during an age of rock 'n' roll.

*Hair* is also notable for creating controversy due to several sequences. At one point toward the end of the first act, the members of the tribe participate in a nude scene while singing a song celebrating their bodies and love. While the original actors were allowed to choose whether or not they wanted to participate and appear nude, according to original cast member Lorrie Davis, the dramatic purpose of the scene was to show physical liberation. Needless to say, the sequence was controversial.

The show also features the previously mentioned number during which draft cards are burned and another in which folding the American flag is portrayed nearly flippantly. As the show gained in popularity and word-of-mouth increased, some objected to these aspects of the show. This proved problematic, especially for touring companies. Productions were canceled completely in Boston and Philadelphia. In Indianapolis, police remained on standby to arrest the company if they were to complete those scenes.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> "*Hair* Ruffles Officials in Indianapolis; South Bend Nix, Evansville Maybe," *Variety*, June 24, 1968.

## **Marketing**

*Hair*, while dealing with its detractors, also had a great deal of support. One reviewer remarked, “The Galt MacDermot score, with lyrics by Ragni and Rado, is a rock classic. It suffers its imitators well, and needs no further endorsement from me. It is not so much integrated music, in the old music comedy sense, as it is a cyclorama of sound.”<sup>29</sup> Other reviews similarly praised the show’s approach to recent events. These interpretations of the show, which appeared in the major New York publications, helped to further *Hair*’s reach to the public.

Advance album sales and tickets sold exclusively to college and youth groups also helped to further boost the show’s popularity.<sup>30</sup> One reporter stated, “Coupled with the large doses of advanced publicity, it is the music, Galt MacDermot’s amalgam of pounding rock and Broadway melody, that has propelled *Hair* into its wide pre-acceptance. There are already nine *Hair* LPs and 60 groups have recorded songs from the show that are broadcast around the world.”<sup>31</sup> Because selections from the score were aired alongside other rock songs, the numbers became integrated into the public’s consciousness. Tickets for younger audience members were distributed primarily in areas close to where the show was playing in New York, Los Angeles, and near touring stops.

The slant toward a more youthful audience was well-documented for every year of the show’s run, considering sales percentages and types of populations.<sup>32</sup> Compiling data on early attendees to the New York production showed most of the audience was under thirty, and many

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<sup>29</sup> Kevin Kelly, “*Hair*, The Wilbur Production,” *Boston Globe*, March 6, 1970, pg. 15.

<sup>30</sup> Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archives, ticket inventory, file of materials related to *Hair*. The materials show that a count taken during the summer months of the tour of *Hair* indicated that 28% of the audience was made up of students.

<sup>31</sup> “*Hair* Around the World,” *Newsweek*, July 7, 1969.

<sup>32</sup> Both the Museum of the City of New York and the New York Library for the Performing Arts house a number of records pertaining to sales, advertising, and customers.

were from out of town. These numbers were highest during the vacation seasons. As the average audience age for all shows had increased the previous decade, Broadway producers and accountants saw a need to reach a wider array of people in order to keep the genre alive. Noting that 28% of the audience was composed of students out of school, continuing efforts were made to increase those numbers as well as cater to other groups. In press releases located at the Museum of the City of New York's collection concerning the show, it is noted that:

Half of the audience consists of those people who do not ordinarily attend theatre and they do not consider *Hair* in the same terms that they would another legitimate production. To continue to increase this type of attendance, that segment of the public must be convinced that *Hair* is not just a theatrical event — a heavier approach must be developed to pull these people to the theatre.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, *Hair* was not an immediate smash hit, in equal parts due to its subject matter, its popular music, and its interactive approach. However, as the show continued to run and began touring to other major cities in the United States and Canada, and the music was widely disseminated on the radio, *Hair* became a cultural and theatrical phenomenon.

### **The Music: An Overview**

The pit list for *Hair* includes the standard elements of a rock ensemble: electric piano, guitars, electric bass, saxophone, trumpet, and drums/percussion.<sup>34</sup> This excludes instrumentation one might normally expect to hear during a musical, such as other woodwind and brass instruments (save for clarinet, which is doubled with saxophone), and high strings. With the rock ensemble as the central source of sound throughout the musical, varying combinations of instruments serve to

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<sup>33</sup> Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archive, unsigned press release, file of materials related to *Hair*.

<sup>34</sup> "Hair." *The Internet Broadway Database*. <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-production/hair-3393>, accessed July 8, 2015.

replace effects or timbres that would have been otherwise played by orchestral voices. This ensemble provides a more appropriate sound for the show as well, since rock music and instruments are noted for suggesting an “edgier” quality to go with more rebellious characters.

The show as a whole includes a sampling of popular music, including rock, country, and hints of funk. World music (that of India, specifically) and more traditional Tin Pan Alley fare are also incorporated into the score. The musical variety serves to help illustrate various characters, or point out hypocrisies in mainstream thinking by using ironic musical styles. While the completed show features an array of styles, Galt MacDermot initially envisioned the show to be wholly based in rock, drawing inspiration from the percussive music heard during his youth.<sup>35</sup>

In addition to crafting a musical score, the instruments at several points serve as sound effects. This is most notable during sequences commenting on the war, with shots and explosions provided by the pit. Secondly, at several points in the show where drug use is featured, the electronic instruments of the pit perform sustained clusters of tones to suggest an altered sense of reality.

### **The Score: Introduction to the Tribe and “Aquarius”**

The show opens with the number “Aquarius,” which sets the scene as the pillars of the hippie culture are explained as “harmony and understanding, sympathy and trust abounding,” among other virtues. The very first sound of the show is supplied by the synthesizer, bending several of the pitches within the melody—an approach later heard in the overture to *Jesus Christ Superstar*.<sup>36</sup> Rather than bend pitches to mark the location as it does for Jerusalem in *Superstar*,

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<sup>35</sup> Berkvist, “He Put Hair on Broadway’s Chest.”

<sup>36</sup> See Galt MacDermot, *Hair*, RCA Victor 1150-2-RC, 1988. CD. Hereafter abbreviated to “OR” for “Original Recording,” Track 1, 0:00.

the bent note in this show projects to the audience their first sonic marker of late 1960s psychedelic rock. The introduction is short, and does not function as an overture would, with quotations from songs to follow. Instead, the instruments of the pit are introduced in turn.

In addition to the synthesizer, electric basses and guitars gradually layer in, each with an assigned groove, under a short brass fanfare, demonstrating that the show's music will be provided primarily by rock instruments, with some commentary from more traditional voices. The blending of rock instruments provides an ambiguous, cloudy atmosphere that likewise serves as an appropriate prelude to the characterization of the hippies and their investment in mind-expanding drugs.<sup>37</sup> The electric guitars themselves are the most prominent instruments throughout the song, featuring two players at a given time playing interlocking *ostinati*.<sup>38</sup>

"Aquarius" explores other markers of rock music of the time, including a prominent bass line, which is the first *ostinato* pattern heard after the opening bent pitch, and heavy backbeat in the drum set.<sup>39</sup> As rhythm was an important element in MacDermot's music, and a significant component of the score on the whole, the introduction of percussion immediately serves as a precursor of music to come. Range and register of the instruments are similarly explored in tandem with smaller groups of the tribe as they enter, reflecting the vocals and ranges of those performers. The song is one of two that reappears later in the show, though in its later iteration, it is treated differently. As a near bookend to the musical, "Aquarius" is reprised, albeit briefly, during the last number as Claude leaves the tribe to honor his draft notice and dies in action. Within that part of

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<sup>37</sup> Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archives, *Playbill*, files of materials related to *Hair*. The *Playbill* for the original production of *Hair* does not include "Aquarius" in their list of songs to be performed. Instead, the first number is suggested to be "Red, Blue, and White."

<sup>38</sup> OR, Track 1, 0:56.

<sup>39</sup> OR, Track 1, 0:21.

the narrative, as the scene is somber, the music is undeniably in minor, though it still features the rock instrumentation performing their individual roles.

What is additionally interesting about “Aquarius” is its life outside of the theater. Several recordings by popular artists, most notably The Fifth Dimension in 1969, created versions for more widespread public consumption. The Fifth Dimension’s recording, performed as a medley with *Hair*’s ultimate number, “Let the Sunshine In (The Flesh Failures),” spent several weeks at the top of the charts in both America and abroad.<sup>40</sup> As the dissemination of music from the show was so widespread, potential audiences were reached quickly and effectively.

After the introduction, the audience meets the foremost members of the tribe for the first time, including Claude and Berger. Berger is portrayed as the looser of the two characters, heavily into drug use and living outside of accepted societal norms.<sup>41</sup> Claude is young and idealistic, and gives an unaccompanied speech about his transcendental beliefs. Immediately following this, Berger leads the tribe in the song “Donna,” which details his love for and loss of a young girl. Under the vocal parts the chorus and percussion play and sing “boom-chicka” patterns consistently, revealing MacDermot’s inclusion of heavy percussive rhythms, as well as serving to further separate the members of the tribe from the squeaky-clean popular styles of the mainstream.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Further covers of the song were performed by such artists as Engelbert Humperdinck, Diana Ross and the Supremes, and the Osmonds. Other songs from the show were released as singles by pop groups, including the title track “Hair” by the Cowsills, “Good Morning Starshine” by Oliver, Andy Williams, and the Osmonds, and “Easy to be Hard” by Three Dog Night. Several of the songs have been presented in more recent media in a humorous capacity, such as “Aquarius/Let the Sunshine In” in *The 40 Year Old Virgin* (2005), and “Hair” in *Minions* (2015).

<sup>41</sup> *Hair* (2008 Theater in the Park), Theatre on Film and Tape Archive, The New York Library for the Performing Arts, viewed June 25, 2015. In the 2008 pre-Broadway version staged in Central Park and directed by Diane Paulus, Berger interacts with the audience at the onset of the show and only wears a vest and loincloth, integrating nudity into the first moments of the show.

<sup>42</sup> OR, Track 2, 0:24.

## **The Score: Drugs**

“Donna” also includes lyrics that give further insight into the lifestyle of the characters on stage in regard to drug use. Approaching the subject from a more spiritual point of view, as in “My Donna”—which can be interpreted as a variation on “Madonna,”—the lyrics refer to “San Francisco” and “psychedelic,” referencing the hippie gathering there in 1967. The titular Donna is described as a “sixteen-year-old virgin,” “a tattooed woman,” who “got busted for her beauty.” As the lattermost phrase refers directly to being caught with illegal drugs, the tribe’s relationship with substances is immediately addressed.<sup>43</sup> “Donna” is similarly an up-tempo number, contrary to other songs in *Hair* that deal with drugs, like “Hashish.” However, what is most striking about this number is the *ostinati* in the bass and drum set. As the first number to reference popular rock rather than psychedelic rock, the primary accompanying instruments are highlighted, as this combination of sounds will be at the forefront of several other numbers in the show.

To continue the topical line of substances, “Donna” segues into “Hashish,” a song that acts as a grocery list of drugs. This is one of the first numbers in the show, following an increased sense of familiarity with the characters, to feature psychedelic rock. As the tribe members state the name of various drugs, including, “heroin, opium, peyote,” among others, the electric guitar plays a series of bent and scooped notes. The tempo is much slower than the preceding number, suggesting that time itself has slowed alongside the characters. Curiously, the number features the drum set, the instrument that keeps time and a sense of the musical beat, whereas in other numbers the rhythms is more fluid. What distorts the sense of time in this number, however, is that other individual instruments play interjecting musical lines against the drum set, though not with any

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<sup>43</sup> “Black beauties” was a name given for biphphetamine pills in the 1960s and ‘70s.



consistently strict sense of rhythm, with the exception of the synthesizer, which plays a series of descending tetrachords. For example, as the number begins, the clarinet plays several triplet figures against the steady eighth note pattern in the drums.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, across the show's first few songs, the audience encounters a psychedelic soundscape, with several obvious references to drugs. Portions of the show feature the characters experiencing a "trip," often conveyed to the audience through use of the electronics. The altered sounds are achieved mainly through the use of pitch bends and other distortion techniques, as well as explicitly direct or indirect references to drugs via the lyrics. For example, during the "Walking in Space" sequence, the cast progresses through a series of disjointed images in their speech, including mentioning, "blinds pulled."<sup>45</sup>

"Walking in Space" is the first in a series of interconnected numbers in the second act that address in more detail important themes of the show, such as drug use, the war, and free love. At the onset of "Walking in Space," in a parallel to the opening of the show, the synthesizer is the only sound heard. Gradually, much like with "Aquarius," a groove and buildup occur, with the electric bass and the electric guitars as the instruments of focus. The members of the tribe allude to visions they experience during their hallucinations, including being "on a rocket to the fourth dimension."<sup>46</sup> The melodic lines that help describe these visions are long and lyrical, almost to the point of being ironic. However, while the vocalists continue their lines, the electric strings and synthesizer play a series of bent notes: the soundscape introduced at the start of the show has come to fruition.

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<sup>44</sup> OR, Track 3, 0:07.

<sup>45</sup> OR, Track 26, 0:26.

<sup>46</sup> OR, Track 26, 2:19.

Much like with the opening of the show itself, “Walking in Space” begins with a groove in the electric guitar that continues throughout. When the tribe sings, “my body,” subsequent guitars and bass join in with the groove, adding additional accompanimental strength.<sup>47</sup> Unlike in “Hashish,” where the drum set offers a point of rhythmic reference, percussion only occasionally plays offbeats underneath the vocals, with the somewhat uneven *ostinati* in the electric strings as the main source of support. Though the drums play in time, the relationship to the rest of the instruments suggests otherwise. Further complexity derives from guitars playing added tones, not allowing for an exact sense of a key area. This altering of the soundscape allows the audience to experience a version of a trip.

The music changes when the tribe begins to sing about colors they are seeing, including “red, black, blue, brown,” among others. The entire pit plays underneath the vocalists, and here the drum set provides consistent eighth notes.<sup>48</sup> This is the first time in the song that the members of the tribe sing rhythmically together, enhanced by the constancy of the drum.

In the number “Air,” the audience gets a glimpse into the personality of Jeanie. She is seen as a character whose indulgences have left her addled. Her musical moments occur during the numbers involving drug use, and the dialogue she has depicts her as easily confused. When she asks Claude why he never calls her, he reminds her that she does not have a phone.

“Air” is another one of the drug-themed songs in the show, initially citing such gases as “sulfur dioxide” and “carbon monoxide,” both of which are harmful or toxic to humans at certain concentrations. While the song opens like an indictment against pollution, later lyrics, such as “far out” and “alcohol bloodstream” suggest the gases might be metaphors for other substances. The

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<sup>47</sup> OR, Track 26, 1:04.

<sup>48</sup> OR, Track 26, 2:54.

song is in a major mode, and much like “Walking in Space,” begins with a guitar *ostinato* and straight quarter notes played on mallet percussion.<sup>49</sup> This opening pattern is light and joyful, much like Jeanie herself is revealed to be.

In the 2009 revival, Jeanie, flanked by fellow tribeswomen Dionne and Chrissy as backup singers, enters the stage wearing a gas mask, which she removes to reveal her grinning. This production also features her forgetting to begin her lyrics, singing only after repeated prompting by the other girls. The song has also been linked to the idea of ecology and poisoning the air with harmful chemicals.

What differentiates “Air” from the previous two numbers described is that it is the most static. Aside from chord changes underneath the vocalists, the guitar and mallet *ostinati* are constant, save for approximately the last two bars, where trumpets play quarter notes on opposing beats to where the vocalists sing. While the continuous pattern does not alter the sense of time, it does drive the music forward energetically.

“Good Morning, Starshine,” sung by Sheila and Dionne with additional vocals by the tribe, occurs immediately after the trip that began during “Walking on Space.” Another song that, like “Aquarius,” succeeded as a hit single, the overall mood of the number is light and happy, reinforced by the major mode and thin texture. While the song does not alter the sense of temporal reality, the nonsensical lyrics, such as “glibby glop gloopy,” suggest characters that have not yet returned to their normal states of mind.

The song parallels “Air,” however, in that it begins with *ostinati* played on guitar, mallets, and, this time, synthesizer. Serving the same roles—mallets and synthesizer keeping a steady pulse

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<sup>49</sup> OR, Track 11, 0:00. The mallet instrument featured on the recording is likely a vibraphone.

and guitar providing some rhythmic intrigue—the instruments segue into the vocals.<sup>50</sup> Also like “Air,” the patterns continue until the rest of the tribe joins in, where flute plays an extended countermelody.<sup>51</sup> The second time the chorus enters, the trumpet performs the same role.<sup>52</sup> The use of these instruments as soloists playing in counterpoint to vocals was similar to music that was popular on the charts around the same time as *Hair*’s creation, including The Mamas and the Papas’ “California Dreaming” (1966) and The Beatles’ “All You Need Is Love” (1967).<sup>53</sup>

### **The Score: Addressing Race**

One of the more shocking elements of the show in its early days was the mix of black and white cast members and their subsequent interactions at a time when interracial couples were far less accepted and the Civil Rights Movement was still under way.<sup>54</sup> While the entire cast sings together during many numbers, in songs where the characters are split by race, the musical treatment of white figures is different than that of black characters, often reflecting the popular styles most aligned with a particular race outside of the theater. This is most easily heard in the back-to-back numbers of “Black Boys” and “White Boys,” during which female members of the tribe declare their fondness for men of skin color different than their own.

The white women who sing “Black Boys” perform a pop number with tight vocal harmonies and less presence of heavy percussion and bass as accompaniment, like many of the other numbers in the show. Rather, the main accompanying instrument is the electric guitar in a high, potentially feminized register, with drum set playing steady quarter notes, keeping a

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<sup>50</sup> OR, Track 30, 0:00.

<sup>51</sup> OR, Track 30, 0:38.

<sup>52</sup> OR, Track 30, 1:29.

<sup>53</sup> The flute as an instrument providing countermelody will also be a feature of *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

<sup>54</sup> The Civil Rights Movement is acknowledged as lasting between 1954 and 1968, dovetailing with the conception and premiere of *Hair*.

consistent beat.<sup>55</sup> With lyrics that refer to the men as “chocolate-flavored love” and liken them to licorice candy, the tempo is upbeat and in a major mode. The opening pattern is only broken when the vocalists begin to sing individually. When this happens, the accompaniment shifts instead to simply the drum set playing steady eighth notes and the keyboard playing descending arpeggios, like a light, popular love song.<sup>56</sup> The music here overall harkens back to early 1960s girl groups, such as The Shirelles, who, although black, employed the same three-part vocal approach and explored more controversial subject matter in their songs, such as one-night stands in “Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?” or other groups like The Shangri-Las, who sang “Leader of the Pack.”

The black females who sing “White Boys,” contrarily, are given a deeply Motown sound, involving heavy use of the electric bass and percussion playing *ostinati*. Their approach is more in line with later 1960s girl groups, such as Martha and the Vandellas, and has a much more aggressive tone. Similar to the preceding number, however, the *ostinati* are heard several times before the vocalists enter, allowing the audience time to notice that the styles are quite different. Further reinforcing a relationship to Motown groups, like The Supremes, instead of singing as a tight-knit trio, this collection of vocalists sing as a soloist and backup. The trumpet makes an entrance to play a countermelody in this number as well, similar to its role in “Good Morning, Starshine.”<sup>57</sup>

While the two styles derive from the same general time period, the groups of characters are differentiated through both accompaniment and overall tone. The two songs finish together,

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<sup>55</sup> OR, Track 24, 0:00.

<sup>56</sup> OR, Track 24, 0:30.

<sup>57</sup> OR, Track 25, 1:04.

however, with the two accompaniment styles pitted against each other as the two choirs insist on their respective desires before combining their sounds and declaring “mixed media.”<sup>58</sup>

Similarly, for purposes of race, near the onset of the show one of the more prominent black characters, Hud, sings a song called “Colored Spade,” which incorporates multiple racial slurs, which he uses to describe himself. He also lists various stereotypes of African-Americans, including their food preferences, while the tribe repeatedly confirms with “so you say.” This bold number, which immediately follows “Sodomy,” pondering why sexual terms are considered so unspeakable in certain circles, also brings about a change in musical sound and style.

The overall musical sound of “Colored Spade” lines up well with that of “White Boys,” in that the electric bass and the drum set have the most complex accompanying patterns, while the electric guitar plays mostly offbeats.<sup>59</sup> Contrary to the other number, however, the pitched instruments play much lower in their ranges to properly support a male vocalist. The low registers and dark mode also add a sense of danger to what he is singing, appropriately highlighting the idea of the “boogeyman” he states as a perception of people of color at that time.

In the second act of the show, while Claude experiences a trip, he sees visions of several prominent American historical figures, including Abraham Lincoln. The decision was made during the early run of the show to have Lincoln be played by an African-American member of the cast, and a female one at that.<sup>60</sup> The racial and gender reversal had a strong impact, and the scene was further enhanced by a musical setting of the Gettysburg Address in a rock style.

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<sup>58</sup> OR, Track 25, 2:19.

<sup>59</sup> OR, Track 5, 0:00.

<sup>60</sup> Lorrie Davis, *Letting Down My Hair; Two Years with the Love Rock Tribe--From Dawning to Downing of Aquarius* (New York: A Fields Books, 1973), 108. According to original cast member Lorrie Davis, the black female members of the cast rotated the part of Lincoln.

As the scene opens, a number of the black actors appear onstage to introduce Lincoln as the “emancipator of the slaves.” This number is set like a song from a minstrel show, with the electric guitar playing banjo-like accompaniment under the vocal lines as they cite stereotypical African-American cuisine and behaviors, like, “pluckin’ y’alls chicken, fryin’ mother’s oats in grease,” conveying to the audience a handful of racial stereotypes that support the negative depiction of slaves during the Civil War.<sup>61</sup> As the song progresses, the electric bass enters, playing a walking bass line under the voices.<sup>62</sup> Rather than the bass-heavy accompaniment associated with these characters based on other numbers, during this scene, the guitars strum and pluck in the style of a banjoist. This particular use of accompaniment is poignant and serves to make a radical social point. The banjo is an instrument of African roots, and, as noted, heavily associated with the nineteenth-century minstrel show, which is notable for its negative depictions of black people. To invoke it here during the show serves to comment on the period’s racial tensions.

The introduction immediately morphs back to a more rock-based sound as Abraham Lincoln enters and proceeds to give the Gettysburg Address. While taken out of its musical time with the addition of electronics and a heavy backbeat, the message of “all men are created equal” relates back to the absurdity of the number’s introduction. The song “Abie Baby,” which later features a birthday wish to Abraham Lincoln, is a ballad, making the aggressive ending of the song that much more powerful. The instrumentation is simple and much like one would expect to find accompanying a rock ballad, with the drum set keeping time, and a pronounced *ostinato* in the bass, as with other musical numbers intended for black members of the cast. However, the song

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<sup>61</sup> OR, Track 27, 0:04.

<sup>62</sup> OR, Track 27, 0:58.

ends abruptly when the backup singers say “bang,” referring to Lincoln’s assassination. The music halts as the actress playing Lincoln states, “Bang! Bang? Shit...I’m not dyin’ for no white man.”<sup>63</sup>

### **The Score: Addressing Sex**

The song that immediately precedes “Colored Spade,” “Sodomy,” explores in a rock-ballad style various terms for sex acts, with light percussive presence and in a high tenor register. With the introduction to “Colored Spade,” the arrangers traded the light backbeat and high register for a much lower range and heavy presence of percussion. The 2009 version of the show presents the song like a gospel choir, with members of the tribe physically lining up behind Berger and singing “oohs” in harmony, before moving into various sexual positions with the cast mates nearest to them. This irreverent approach confirms Berger’s views, the attitudes about sex shared among members of the counterculture, and, as the song is treated as a confession with a priest, solidifies that for the audience.

Sex is referenced as components of other numbers as well. In the number “My Conviction,” the parents of the tribe are envisioned as old-fashioned and out of touch.<sup>64</sup> The accompaniment throughout is primarily piano and bass; the reduced instrumentation and nature of the writing for the piano, consisting mainly of triplets against the walking bass line, further highlights the idea that these characters are both different from the tribe and are meant to be funny. The mother character offers a parallel between the hair and dress of the male members of the tribe and other species of animals, whose appearances aid in garnering female attention. The drastic change in

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<sup>63</sup> OR, Track 27, 2:34.

<sup>64</sup> The mother character is traditionally played by a male member of the tribe in drag.



tone between this number and “Sodomy” demonstrates the different views on sex between generations.

Relations are also alluded to in the songs “Black Boys” and “White Boys,” where the girls of the tribe express their affinity for men with different coloring than their own. Stylistically, these songs do not reflect either “Sodomy” or “My Conviction.”

### **The Score: Addressing War**

The Vietnam War is referenced a number of times during *Hair*, but the most prominent instance of reacting to the events takes place during “Three-Five-Zero-Zero” in the second act. During this song, not only do the lyrics refer to a number of war-related items, such as explosions and shrapnel, but the instrumentation serves as sound effects as well. At the very start of the number, similar to the start of the show, the synthesizer plays a sustained note. However, it changes pitch, sliding down and then back up, creating the effect of an air-raid siren.<sup>65</sup>

Prior to the first entrance of the vocalists, the synthesizer begins to play straight quarter notes, soon joined by the guitar and piano. This steady pattern of four also harkens to a march, associated with soldiers and the military. This also occurs in the bridge of “Walking in Space,” where the tribe alludes to the draft.

Though not a component of the original recording, the 2009 revival recording includes a reprise of “Ain’t Got No,” during which Claude, who has indeed been drafted, is shown to be in the midst of war. Providing the sound effects of flying bullets are rim shots on the drum set, which

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<sup>65</sup> OR, Track 28, 0:00.

occur after every iteration of the words “ain’t got no.”<sup>66</sup> This section of the song is significant; in the first appearance of “Ain’t Got No,” the lyrics are punctuated by members of the tribe singing with Claude. In this reappearance, instead of words, Claude experiences the devastation of war and the eventual loss of his life rather than the comfort of being with his friends.

### **The Score: Other Influences**

However, other elements of the plot required casting a wider musical net. Growing fascination with Eastern philosophy during the 1960s suggested including numbers in which Buddha and Hare Krishna appear (“Be-In”). If those notions were to be addressed, music written in a Western manner would be significantly less appropriate. Given the instrumentation at hand that is decidedly Western, MacDermot’s approach was to write music that included Eastern modes and melodies that featured bent notes.<sup>67</sup> The rhythmic patterns are also varied from standard rock patterns and grooves to percussive patterns derived from raga patterns.<sup>68</sup>

While demonstrating an advertised affinity for rock music, *Hair* samples different styles and utilizes varied instrumental combinations depending on who is singing or what is happening in the show. When portraying parental characters or anything else viewed as establishment, the music becomes stricter, more traditional, employing steady rhythmic patterns and less prominent rock instrumentation. Female characters are matched with sounds that are higher, lighter, and less texturally dense, while male characters generally are associated with thicker, darker sounds. This

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<sup>66</sup> *Hair* (2008 Theater in the Park), Theatre on Film and Tape Archive, The New York Library for the Performing Arts, viewed June 25, 2015. This moment is not captured on the original recording.

<sup>67</sup> Though this approach was likely new to many theatergoers, The Beatles’ inclusion of Eastern-inspired music in popular music was well-known by the time *Hair* premiered.

<sup>68</sup> This is most noticeable during the number “Be-In.”

is complicated by the fact that typically there have been moments of cross-dressing in the production, especially in regard to Abraham Lincoln.

In several numbers, accompaniment for the singers is primarily by percussion and bass for the vast majority of the song with perhaps just a momentary appearance of winds or strings in a verse. In these songs, the tribe members generally reinforce subject matter by repeating phrases or syllables. This is the case in a number like the first statement of “Ain’t Got No,” “Be-In,” and large portions of “Hair.” Since these songs have more content lyrically, the choice may have been made in order to not cover the vocalists and also to include vocal *ostinati*, which were common in rock songs of the time.

Defining a rock ballad ensemble arrangement as guitar and electric bass playing soft *ostinati* and drum set playing light patterns with brushes, the ingredients to create a rock love song are used in several numbers. The most ironic use of rock ballad music is in conjunction with singing about various sexual terms rather than a particular person in the song “Sodomy.” It renders the sound of a typical rock love song comical. In a number like “Easy to Be Hard,” the guitar supplies what is akin to an Alberti bass pattern, and the percussion sounds sparingly. Rather, the electric bass supplies the bulk of the rhythm, emphasizing downbeats and the beginnings of phrases.<sup>69</sup>

There is an obvious folk feel to several songs where the primary source of instrumental accompaniment lies in the guitar. The more folk-driven songs include the intro to “Abie Baby” (which is one of the more racially charged portions of the show, and thus has a minstrelsy feel to it), “Don’t Put It Down,” and “The Bed,” though there is a noticeable lack of acoustic guitar and

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<sup>69</sup> OR, Track 17. Examples of emphasizing the beginnings of phrases occur in such places as 0:10 and 0:31.

addition of electric instruments (guitar playing substitute for banjo, at least in the original recording), brass, and a lot of percussion.

In “Don’t Pull It Down,” the intense patriotic fervor of the South is conveyed through the guitar accompaniment, functioning in part like a banjo and part like bluegrass guitar. The banjo, in addition to being associated with African-Americans, has also traditionally been aurally allied with the Deep South. For the bluegrass style, which developed out of Southern mountain dance music and songs, guitars typically serve several purposes, including keeping the beat, embellishing selections of the melody, and filling in chords, all of which happen during this number. The words mock the unquestioning and unwavering support for the country and government perceived to be standard in the South, as most hippies constantly questioned government action and considered their position on their support.

“The Bed,” a number alluding to several aspects of hippie culture, including “bed-ins” and sharing one’s bed, features several folk styles. The opening of the number is unaccompanied by instruments, and is instead in the style of early American song gatherings. Shortly thereafter, the tribe sings in harmony and with instruments immediately introduced, including trumpet, guitar, trombone, and saxophone.<sup>70</sup> The song takes on an instantly comedic tone as the tribe sings about all the activities one can do in a bed as the saxophone and trombone play a series of slides upon their entrance.

The sounds MacDermot employed for many numbers are manipulated rather than genuine; the instruments are either substitutions or provided electronically. The songs are either allusions to specific ideas or people or are mocking them. This is also somewhat true of the song “Be-In,”

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<sup>70</sup> OR, Track 31. The trumpet and guitar enter at 0:36 and the sax and trombone enter at 0:38.

which involves no Eastern instruments, but includes the manipulation of the guitars, brass, and percussion to play patterns and flattened notes suggesting the East.

Winds, brass, and supplemental percussion do make appearances when the occasion calls for them, usually when a character is mentioning America, such as in “I Believe in Love,” where the brasses play clips of “My Country ‘Tis of Thee.” There is also a flute countermelody in “Initials,” harkening back to earlier rock songs such as “California Dreamin’” by The Mamas and the Papas, which feature similar instrumentation. Portions of “Three-Five-Zero-Zero,” which takes place during a battle, also feature brass fanfares to highlight the patriotic nature of the action. Reading a bit farther philosophically into the orchestration, the contrast of traditional and rock is representative of the tribe trying to protest the war and societal confines and restrictions.

The tribe’s overall “Otherness” from society is clearly highlighted in a number of ways, but in the previously discussed number “My Conviction,” the character of 1948, an amalgamation of many parental archetypes, musically explains their perception of the Counterculture. The scoring moves farther away from rock when discussing traditional values, and for some numbers, including “My Conviction,” the use of instrumentation serves to underscore the disdain the tribe members have for those ideals.

Claude is the only character seen interacting directly with his parents. He shrugs off their queries about finding steady employment, following “Psychedelic Stone Age,” which occurs in the vein of a radio advertisement from the 1940s, the era of his parents. Claude looks at his draft notice, his father telling him: “The army will make a man outta you!” He later interacts further with his parents, characterized as 1948 against his 1968. After being asked, “What have you got, 1968, that makes you so damned superior?,” Claude responds with the number “I Got Life.”

“Good Morning Starshine” features synthesized harp and flute. The harp plays an *ostinato* under the vocalist during the verses while the flute comes in with the first entrance of the chorus (later replaced by trumpet) playing a smattering of sixteenth notes that have little relation to any other melodic material. This perhaps reinforces how disjointed the tribe’s thoughts or actions seem to be throughout the show, especially under the circumstances of the time.

Individual characters are also marked by changes in orchestration. This is most apparent with Claude, seen as naïve, who is generally depicted by high electric guitar and less presence of percussion, allowing the majority of his music to sound light and pure. This technique of musically defining a character through orchestration will be seen in other shows in this study, including *Promises, Promises*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *Pippin*.<sup>71</sup>

## **Responses and Reviews**

While rife with objectionable content, *Hair* ultimately was a massive success. On April 29, 1972, it became the seventh musical in the history of Broadway to run into a fifth year.<sup>72</sup> In addition to the company working in New York, the show had productions in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Toronto, among others, in addition to three major North American touring companies, dubbed “Jupiter,” “Venus,” and “Mercury.” The show also was staged outside of the U.S. and Canada, including Mexico, France, and in Tel Aviv, opening in twenty-two countries in fourteen languages.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> This approach to orchestration will be heard correlating to the characters of Chuck, Jesus, and Pippin.

<sup>72</sup> Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archives, press fact sheet, file of materials related to *Hair*. The other shows that had five year runs at that time included *My Fair Lady*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Hello, Dolly!*, *Man of La Mancha*, *Oklahoma!*, and *South Pacific*.

<sup>73</sup> Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archives, press fact sheet, file of materials related to *Hair*.

Publicity was a double-edged sword. While controversial aspects of the show became famous, such as the nude scene and burning the flag, publicists realized the impact the show could potentially have and saved as much information on and clippings about the show as possible from all productions. In a letter from David Wallace in the show's national press office in Los Angeles to the producer, Michael Butler, he described wanting to centralize information on the show, creating a database so any and all writings on the show would be preserved. Papers and publicists all over the country were borrowing data in preparation for tours or their own productions, which led to losing information. Wallace further offered that *Hair* was "the theatrical phenomenon of the generation."<sup>74</sup>

Those who handled press for *Hair*, both in New York and in other major cities throughout its run, continued to make concerted efforts to draw in younger, diverse crowds.<sup>75</sup> In Toronto, summer camps were given flyers advertising the show, with statements such as: "Leaves and trees and fun and air and HAIR-that's what summer's made of. And HAIR is fun. Especially for people who know how to have fun. People like children, like your campers."<sup>76</sup>

Feedback received from audiences was taken seriously, with producer Michael Butler responding to some questions, ideas, or complaints himself. Upon receiving a letter from a Mort Leavy in July, 1970, discussing the treatment of the American flag, Butler thanked him for his letter and promised to take his views into account. Though Butler's letter did not disclose Leavy's

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<sup>74</sup> Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archives, letter, file of materials related to *Hair*. Dated July 21, 1970.

<sup>75</sup> Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archives, program, file of materials related to *Hair*. The third anniversary of the show was marked by a performance at the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine in New York City, where the cast performed selections of the show in place of the Eucharist.

<sup>76</sup> Billy Rose Theatre Collection, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, press release, dated 1970, file of materials related to *Hair*. Credited to Maureen O'Donnell on behalf of the Toronto company of the show.

initial thoughts, other pieces of feedback regarding the production, including the volume of the music being too loud and the dialogue being unintelligible, were included.

The 2008 Central Park production of *Hair*, directed by Diane Paulus and which carried over to become the 2009 Broadway revival, retained much of the show's original flavor. Though members of the cast were not themselves members of the 1960s counterculture, efforts were made to reenact mannerisms and reinforce ideals associated with the movement. The revival also employed some re-orchestrated portions of the score, featuring the electronic instruments of the pit more prominently, especially in the numbers that suggest increased drug use and in the title number. Despite a moderately successful run of its own, over 500 performances, investors were initially hesitant to back the show, wondering if the revival of *Hair* could be as successful as it had been during its original run, or even during the performances in the park. After cutting costs and opening to good reviews, investors began to put money into the new production, noting that, in addition to younger crowds who were completely new to the show, the older crowds who remembered the original 1968 version, or were at least familiar with commercial recordings, were keeping attendance high.<sup>77</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Though *Hair* is now considered by many people as “that hippie show,” or one of a rotation of shows that is performed by colleges and community theaters, in the 1960s it greatly impacted the continued development of the Broadway musical. An honest staging of a portion of the American populace, detailing their ideals, as well as discussions of previously taboo topics, all with the aid of electronic and rock instrumentation, was completely new.

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<sup>77</sup> Patrick Healy, “Producers Relieved over Future of ‘Hair,’” *New York Times*, April 14, 2009, C1.



Though not all subsequent theatrical productions were accompanied by rock music in the same way or for the same purpose as *Hair*, instruments such as the electric guitar and synthesizers became more frequently used by orchestrators and arrangers. Reflecting the music of the time, MacDermot's choices contributed much to the show's lasting success. Critic Edward Sothorn Hipp stated: "It (*Hair*) brings honest, authentic rock to Broadway...Aside to the musical composers of Broadway: Better get groovy soon, fellows, or the Galt MacDermots will take over."<sup>78</sup> Numerous reviews had similar reactions regarding the music for the show.

*Hair*'s impact, topically and musically, cannot be understated. As suggested by a fact sheet supplied on behalf of the show:

As the first voice in the entertainment field for peace, ecology (the subject of the song "Air"), and loving one another, HAIR became synonymous with the counterculture and was probably a major force in presenting the lifestyle of a minority so forcefully that it became the lifestyle of an entire generation.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Edward Sothorn Hipp, "Hair on Broadway," *The Newark Evening News*, April 30, 1968.

<sup>79</sup> Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archives, fact sheet, file of materials related to *Hair*.

## **Chapter 2: *Promises, Promises***

“His [Burt Bacharach’s] responses to the popular acclaim for *Promises, Promises* were characteristically conflicting; he claimed disinterest in future Broadway shows, but described some adventurous innovations he had in mind for a “now” musical.”<sup>1</sup>

Despite *Hair* laying powerful groundwork for acceptance of rock music in the theater, not all shows categorized as “rock musicals” are comparatively as infused with associated instruments and styles. As per Scott Warfield’s explanation of what might constitute a rock musical, some productions merely fit the profile because of the inclusion of certain markers of popular styles, however subtle or obvious.<sup>2</sup> This is the case whether the score as a whole can be viewed as containing rock, or even lighter styles of pop music. Such is the case with *Promises, Promises*, a show with a book by playwright Neil Simon and based on Billy Wilder’s film, *The Apartment* (1960). The music of *Promises, Promises*, composed by popular songwriter Burt Bacharach, slightly harkens to early rock of the 1960s, when the show is set, as well as traditional Broadway songs.

As *Promises, Promises* marks a departure in both style and subject matter from *Hair*, this chapter will approach this show differently to aid in its discussion, including in-depth profiles of Chuck Baxter, the protagonist, Fran Kubelik, the love interest, and moderate focus on the secondary characters. This show does not address many major societal issues, as does *Hair*. And in *Promises, Promises*, the smaller cast of characters and less reactionary circumstances invite less

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<sup>1</sup> “Entertainers of the Year,” *Cue Magazine* (undated-likely 1968). Bacharach was named an entertainer of the year, an honor he shared with Hal David.

<sup>2</sup> See Introduction, pages 20-21.

experimentation in terms of musical styles. However, the involvement of Bacharach and his inclusion of techniques previously seen only in recording studios will also be addressed.

Burt Bacharach's career as a songwriter, with his progressive approach to composition and his partnership with lyricist Hal David, who was similarly well-known outside of the theater, made him a fine candidate to compose for the stage.<sup>3</sup> Bacharach had a background in both classical and popular music traditions, having been a student of Darius Milhaud and Henry Cowell at various points in his development, providing him with a broad array of musical tools and methods.<sup>4</sup> Given that Milhaud and Cowell incorporated experimental aspects in their own works, Bacharach's penchant for the unexpected in his scores can perhaps be traced to his education. Though born in Kansas City, Bacharach's musicianship developed in New York, California, and Montreal, allowing him to experience a palette of regional sounds and compositional approaches.<sup>5</sup>

Growing up studying piano, Bacharach's earliest professional employment was as an accompanist for such performers as Vic Damone, Imogene Coca, Marlene Dietrich, and Polly Bergen.<sup>6</sup> Given the range in personalities and performance styles represented by those entertainers, Bacharach had to be versed in many styles and flexible enough to adapt to new performers. Additionally, his enlistment papers in the 1950s stated that his occupation was "concert pianist,"

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<sup>3</sup> Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archives, press release (ca. 1968), file of materials related to *Promises, Promises*. In a press release by Bill Doll and Company, it was announced that David became one of six lyricists, along with Lorenz Hart, Noel Coward, Ira Gershwin, Oscar Hammerstein II, and Cole Porter to have his work preserved in a printed collection. The release also noted that David was one of ASCAP's top earning lyricists.

<sup>4</sup> Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archives, *Playbill* biography, file of materials related to *Promises, Promises*.

<sup>5</sup> Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archives, *Playbill* biography, file of materials related to *Promises, Promises*.

<sup>6</sup> Rex Reed, "Burt Bacharach: No More 'Promises,'" *The New York Times*, 15 December 1968.

and as such, he spent several years performing for officers and soldiers.<sup>7</sup> Despite his history with the instrument, Bacharach claims to compose his music in his head rather than at the keyboard.<sup>8</sup>

At the time of the conception of *Promises, Promises*, Bacharach's compositional output was mainly associated with popular songs and film scores, and his relationship with singer Dionne Warwick in particular helped to catapult him to great fame. He was nominated for four Academy Awards, and won two, for the songs "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head" and "The Look of Love."<sup>9</sup> His reputation and musical style, though not inherently theatrical, was novel.

Though Bacharach is less closely aligned with the same rock styles that powered *Hair*, as a popular songwriter he included several markers of rock styles. The instrumentation used for his songs in *Promises, Promises* resembles that of a rock group, including electric guitars, drum set, and synthesizer, along with several other instruments for color. This was completely intentional, as Bacharach stated in an interview with critic Rex Reed:

...before this show the quality of sound in the theater was really rotten. I tried to get the right musicians, who could play my kind of pop music, instead of the usual pit orchestra. I went for younger guys. I put in an electronic booth to control the choral voices I used with the music. I inserted fiberglass panels to separate the sound from mike to mike and tried to achieve the same conditions you get in a recording session without the isolated sound of music coming through speakers. It's a very complicated electronic system, with echo chambers and equalizers and technical equipment, and David Merrick was great. He spent all the money I asked for.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Reed, "Burt Bacharach: No More 'Promises.'"

<sup>8</sup> Reed, "Burt Bacharach: No More 'Promises.'"

<sup>9</sup> Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archives, *Playbill* biography, file of materials related to *Promises, Promises*.

<sup>10</sup> Reed, "Burt Bacharach: No More 'Promises.'"

Following the success of director Billy Wilder's *The Apartment*, a meeting between Neil Simon (b. 1927) and producer David Merrick (1911-2000) generated the idea of crafting a musical based on the movie.<sup>11</sup> Merrick was known for his association with a number of Broadway musicals and plays, including *Gypsy* (1959), *Hello, Dolly!* (1964), and *Oliver!* (1965). Neil Simon was known for works such as his play *The Odd Couple* (1965) and the libretto for *Sweet Charity* (1966). Robert Moore was selected as director and Michael Bennett, who was later responsible for *A Chorus Line* (1975), was named the choreographer.

Though the other members of the production staff had backgrounds in musical theater, and the subject matter was familiar due to the success of Wilder's film, Bacharach was new to the schedule and demands of composing for the theater. Similarly, the restrictions placed on the music and musicians due to the space in the pit, rendered complex Bacharach's desire to emulate a recording studio inside the theater. The music for the show overall, orchestrated by Jonathan Tunick, is largely popular in nature, mostly due to Bacharach's background and reputation, rather than relying fully on standard theatrical styles.

Tunick, a key figure in orchestrating three of the case studies in this dissertation, had his first success with *Promises, Promises*. Originally a clarinetist and participant in a dance band at Fiorello H. La Guardia High School of Music and Art, and later earning degrees in composition from Bard College and Juilliard, Tunick spent his early years working on Broadway as a protégé of Robert Ginzler.<sup>12</sup> Ginzler had, in fact, been the orchestrator for *Bye Bye Birdie*, an earlier show that incorporated rock instruments into the pit. Tunick acknowledges having always been

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<sup>11</sup> Serene Dominic, *Burt Bacharach Song By Song: The Ultimate Burt Bacharach Reference for Fans, Serious Record Collector, and Music Critics* (New York: Music Sales Group, 2003), 199.

<sup>12</sup> Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archives, *Playbill* biography, file of materials related to *Promises, Promises*. See also Steven Suskin, *The Sound of Broadway Music: A Book of Orchestrators & Orchestrations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 46.

fascinated by instruments, stating: “When I was 8 or 9, our teacher would play records like *Tubby the Tuba* and *Peter and the Wolf*, and this exposure to musical instruments and orchestras created a passion for them that has dominated my life.”<sup>13</sup>

Tunick had completed orchestrations on only two other shows prior to working on *Promises, Promises: From A to Z* (1960) and *Here’s Where I Belong* (1968), the former running only about two weeks and the latter only one night.<sup>14</sup> In order to develop his skills as an orchestrator, Tunick studied opera and film scores to take note of how the music helped support the drama and narrative, stating, “I found that what lighting does for the visual aspects of the theatre, orchestration can do for the aural aspects.”<sup>15</sup> Though *Promises, Promises* is early in Tunick’s career and features less instrumental experimentation than his later credits, it demonstrates his attention to variance between characters, a recurring attribute in his work.

In Scott McMillin’s *The Musical as Drama*, the author suggests that, in the tradition of composers like Wagner, the orchestra pit functions as a sort of omniscient figure, informing the audience of how to feel and how to react to what is happening on stage.<sup>16</sup> Tunick has stated that his intention is for his orchestrations and arrangements to serve just that purpose:

The orchestra is one of the theatre's big secrets. It can express the unspoken; it can express character and it can express subtext. It can say what the characters are unable to say for themselves, or even that of which they may be unaware. I look for these opportunities: for ambivalence,

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<sup>13</sup> “Jonathan Tunick,” <http://www.biography.com/people/jonathan-tunick-21415689#career-success>, accessed May 10, 2016.

<sup>14</sup> Some sources state that Tunick’s true first work was *Take Five* (1957), but this is not consistent across all resources.

<sup>15</sup> Mervyn Rothstein, “A Life in the Theatre: Orchestrator, Composer and Music Director Jonathan Tunick,” September 16, 2005, from <http://www.playbill.com/article/a-life-in-the-theatre-orchestrator-composer-and-music-director-jonathan-tunick-com-128071>, accessed May 10, 2016.

<sup>16</sup> Scott McMillin, *The Musical as Drama: A Study of the Principles and Conventions Behind Musical Shows from Kern to Sondheim* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

irony and conflict; feelings that, though unspoken, can be suggested subliminally by the orchestra.<sup>17</sup>

While not as intricate in terms of characters and plot as *Hair* or as musically intricate as Tunick's next contribution, *Company* (1970), his reaction to the music as composed by Bacharach continued to push toward the acceptance of popular music in the theater.

### **Synopsis**

*Promises, Promises* details the story of Chuck (C.C.) Baxter, a young man in the corporate world, working as an entry-level employee at an insurance firm. Chuck is perpetually conned into lending his apartment to senior members of his company for their extramarital trysts; these men then proceed to offer Baxter promises of promotions or other special favors in return. However, their guarantees are never entirely fulfilled, and Chuck is subjected to multiple inconveniences or humiliations. These include becoming ill due to having to remain outside in inclement weather while the temporary inhabitants entertain guests, and falling under the suspicion of his doctor neighbor, who assumes he is a cad due to the variety of women he sees exiting their building.

Chuck's initially unrequited crush on a coworker, Fran Kubelik, is a central thread of the musical, and his discovery of her participation in several of these visits to his apartment becomes a turning point in Chuck's initially naïve characterization. Fran first comes to Chuck's apartment to continue an affair with his boss, Mr. Jeff Sheldrake. While the viewers are made aware of Baxter as a personable young man in contrast to Sheldrake's insensitive boor, Fran requires the length of the production to reach the same conclusion.

Sheldrake later enters into an agreement with Chuck, wherein he would be loaned Baxter's apartment as a space in which to conduct "out-of-office business"; unbeknownst to Chuck, this

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<sup>17</sup> Rothstein, "A Life in the Theatre."

involves Fran, given an alias, which the audience comes to learn is Sheldrake's habit with his girlfriends. Chuck, meanwhile, has come to like Fran, and gets to know her better. He sings "She Likes Basketball," detailing what he has in common with her, an upbeat song to counter his occasionally gloomy mood, spurred on by his predicament of temporary homelessness. Unfortunately, Chuck is oblivious to the relationship between Fran and Sheldrake, and assumes that when Fran shows up at the end of the basketball game that she has stood him up on purpose.

During an evening at Chuck's apartment with Sheldrake, Fran decides to end her life, taking a handful of pills. Chuck discovers her, and with Dr. Dreyfuss's aid, helps Fran to recover. Chuck's charitable nature causes Fran to reconsider him, and the strength she gains from him allows her to break ties to Sheldrake. Simultaneously, Chuck develops the ability to tell his company's senior members that they are no longer welcome to use his home, and quits his job.

### **The Score: Chuck**

At the onset of the show, Chuck greets the audience as a hopeful character. He imagines portions of his interactions with his coworkers and Fran; it becomes clear these segments are asides, and they occur throughout the show. These instances usually feature Fran telling Chuck how wonderful he is and how wrong she was to never notice him. This breaking of the fourth wall only ceases at the end of the show, when he realizes that something truly nice Fran said to him was actually uttered aloud. However, this element of the show exists only in dialogue; in song, Baxter either sings directly with another character, or he sings by himself, reflecting on his feelings. Chuck also has moments of self-doubt as he functions as a cog within a large insurance company, remarking in the opening monologue that he feels "puny" and ignored by his boss.



Chuck is also presented to the audience as somewhat gullible, as another senior member of the firm tricks him into lending out his apartment to care for a “sick” young woman. In a moment of dramatic irony, the audience is well aware that the girl in question is completely healthy. Chuck quickly realizes that he is actually allowing his home to be used to conduct extramarital affairs, and attempts to put an end to the situation until he is offered promises in return. The initial arrangement sets into motion a series of interactions with higher-ups in the firm and dealings with his suspicious neighbor, Dr. Dreyfuss.

Chuck explores a spectrum of emotions, and introduces himself with an “I Want” song. These numbers generally detail a character’s desires at the beginning of a show that, through the events of the show’s plot, either come to fruition or are never fulfilled. Chuck wants to be recognized and rewarded at work, he wants a relationship with Fran, and ultimately, he wants to be happy. “Half as Big as Life” is the first full number in the show and Chuck’s “I Want” song. The orchestrations, which vary between the verses, serve to highlight the character’s range of personality, from excitable to insecure. By this point, dramatically, the audience has been introduced to Chuck and several of his neuroses, and his feeling of puniness in the company. He subsequently invites the viewers to help in figuring out what is wrong with him, seemingly oblivious to his own weak and easily manipulated persona.

At the beginning of the song, his vocal lines are played verbatim by the piano, and the electric guitar continuously plays either straight eighth notes or offbeats. The number switches meters throughout, a signature approach of Bacharach, from 4/4 to 6/4 to 3/4 during each verse.<sup>18</sup> The texture at this point in the song is thin as Chuck tells the audience, “I don’t look so good to

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<sup>18</sup> Burt Bacharach, *Vocal Selections from Promises, Promises* (Secaucus, New Jersey: Warner Bros. Publications Inc., 1969).

myself!” The first section of the song suggests that Chuck may be a quiet, non-confrontational figure.

However, as the song continues, more instruments become integrated into the score, including French horns and trumpets (both brass groups playing stingers rather than portions of the melody) and violins, playing rising tetrachords.<sup>19</sup> The incorporation of stringed instruments to play sustained lines or countermelodies under vocalists was a common compositional trait of the late 1960s, heard in such songs as Bacharach and David’s “What the World Needs Now” (1965) and “Eleanor Rigby” (1966) by The Beatles, and in the previous decade in such songs as Buddy Holly’s “It Doesn’t Matter Anymore” (1959). The sudden change in texture and timbre in “Half as Big as Life” demonstrates Chuck’s hopefulness, as he sings lines such as, “A cover is not the whole book,” and “deep in my heart I can feel that I’m ten feet tall.”

When the brasses first enter, they play at a piano dynamic, and as the lyrics turn toward more confidence, so too do the trumpets and trombones become louder and bolder. The audience, then, is exposed to both facets of Chuck’s characterization: that he is insecure, but he wants to be successful in both his professional and personal lives. This number also marks the first noticeable appearance of a synthesized organ (Hammond B), the electronic timbre adding to the show’s popular flavor.<sup>20</sup>

Chuck completes the number by listing his goals for the audience. By this point, the orchestration has evolved into the full complement of the pit, both traditional and rock instruments. The resulting composite sound is full and rich, signaling that Chuck, despite his apparent failings,

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<sup>19</sup> See Burt Bacharach, *Promises, Promises*, United Artists Records UAS-9902, 1968. CD. Hereafter abbreviated to “OR” for “Original Recording,” Track 2, 0:19.

<sup>20</sup> OR, Track 2, 0:45.

does have it in him to be a redeemable character in the end. The use of the full complement of the pit returns to support the character at the end of the show, once Chuck has denied the other men any further use of his living space.

In “Upstairs,” Chuck sings a love song to his apartment, with the admission that the space is sometimes otherwise occupied. This number provides additional insight into the more tender side of Chuck’s personality. The instrumentation of “Upstairs” is fairly similar to “Half as Big as Life”; however, the mood of the music is more akin to light jazz than the preceding number. Here, the piano plays grace notes to punctuate the vocal lines, and the percussion provides a series of backbeats.<sup>21</sup> Baritone saxophone is featured in place of the electric bass, playing an *ostinato* under other instruments. The notable added instrument here is the electric piano, which appears at the end of the verses of the song, playing *glissandi*. The piano effects give the number a suggestion of the romantic, alluding to both Chuck’s own love of his freedom, and the other forms of love associated with the space. In keeping with the flavor of a ballad, the pit, aside from the piano, functions as standard accompaniment with no riffs or solos as one might hear in more popular-infused numbers.

As Chuck sings about his apartment and the feelings of comfort and home he gets by living there for “eighty-six fifty a month,” the mood starts out hopeful, and by the end, the names and activities of the company’s executives enter the lyrics and action, clouding his sunny outlook. This number comes early in the show, before Chuck is entirely aware of the intentions of his superiors, and thus is more positive than several of his later songs.

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<sup>21</sup> OR, Track 3, 0:06.

Chuck's music, in part because he is the main protagonist, and in part because of his more hopeful nature, spans a range from reflective to upbeat. This allows the accompanying voices to fill several more roles. In "She Likes Basketball," Chuck sings a half-awed, half-fantasizing ballad in which he further expresses his attraction to Fran because of their shared interest. The song is a waltz, in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time and marked at a *moderato* tempo, a dance reflecting love. As Chuck is singing about a basketball game, the historical implications of composing the song over a waltz can be perceived as ironic.

Because of the traditional nature of "She Likes Basketball," rock instruments are barely included, save for the baritone saxophone and electric bass punctuating downbeats, with the orchestration focusing instead on orchestral instruments of the pit. This includes short *glissandi* by the synthesized harp and the flutes at the ends of phrases throughout.<sup>22</sup> As with "Upstairs," the sweeping motions the harpist makes add an additional romantic tinge to the number, supporting the lyrics.

The orchestral strings and horns supply sustained sequences underneath the vocal line in "She Likes Basketball," while the percussion plays patterns of alternating quarter notes and emphasizing notes on the first beat of the bar.<sup>23</sup> The use of the strings and horns relates to both then-contemporary popular songs as well as prior theatrical numbers, such as the title number from *Oklahoma!*, where the sustained notes allow for an increase in tension as the song progresses. The accompaniment throughout, particularly in reference to the triple meter, reinforces the dance referenced in the number. Chuck, then, is not only shown to be a hopeless romantic, but also a

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<sup>22</sup> OR, Track 6, 0:03.

<sup>23</sup> OR, Track 6, 0:00.

traditional one, relying on conventional music, rather than a more progressive pop ballad, to express his excitement.

Chuck's final solo number in the show, the title song "Promises, Promises," shows the character's development from pushover to mature young man. Rather than simple accompanimental patterns on piano and guitar, the percussion and the brasses are the most prominent instrumental voices. This more forceful instrumentation had previously been aligned in the production mostly with Sheldrake, and as such, a shift in power is heard. Shortly after Chuck makes statements such as "I don't know how I got the nerve to walk out" and "their kind of promises can just destroy your life" the two groups of instruments provide fast, sharp rhythmic patterns.<sup>24</sup> These patterns are reminiscent of music from other shows, such as "America" from *West Side Story* in relationship to meter changes (or, through rhythmic displacement and hemiolas, what feels like meter changes), and even classical sources, such as Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, due to the accented chords appearing in different parts of the bar at different points of the song. The loud, striking sound of this number shows Chuck not as a hapless romantic, but now as a young, capable man.

Chuck's accompaniment does vary slightly prior to this moment of realization, usually reflecting the other characters with whom he is interacting. He engages in a duet with Marge MacDougall, whom he meets in a bar on Christmas Eve, entitled, "A Fact Can Be a Beautiful Thing." It is perhaps the loosest he is during the production because he is drunk and suggestible, and we learn Marge is an obvious barfly, being on a first-name basis with the bartender. Another dance-like entry, though the meter changes frequently, from 4/4 to 6/4 to 3/4, the harmonic and

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<sup>24</sup> OR, Track 17, 1:10.

rhythmic plan is more intricate than earlier numbers, reflecting the complications in Chuck's life. The chords present in this song are prolonged, and progress unexpectedly. This song is largely void of rock instruments, focusing instead on piano, strings, brass, and organ. The trumpets and horns play a countermelody, a departure from their typical role as playing stingers, and this change in timbre suggests not only Marge's brashness, but also Chuck's building confidence.<sup>25</sup> The appearance of the organ here, playing a solo without the other pit instruments on the line "throw a little joy my way," serves two purposes.<sup>26</sup> Chuck and Marge remark about the fact that it is Christmas, and the organ is a standard church instrument, and also, the stark contrast in timbre from brasses and strings to synthesized organ demonstrates the sharp departure in character for Chuck, who becomes more amenable to Marge.

Chuck also participates in a duet with Mr. Sheldrake after reaching an agreement to lend him his apartment; the two engage in a duet entitled: "Our Little Secret." The newly added instrument in this number is the tambourine in the percussion, creating associations to both folk-based and pop genres, as well as incorporating a sense of whimsy. The number, which is intended to be more comedic, is fast-paced and includes very little instrumental activity until the ends of vocal lines. Even during the bridge of the song, if instruments play, they function solely as accompaniment playing in tandem with the vocal lines. The number is in a fast three, also referencing a waltz, and to add to the character of the song, the pit plays oom-pah patterns during stretches of the song, with the bass voices playing the downbeat "oom" and the high strings and winds playing the upbeat "pahs."<sup>27</sup> The triple patterns harken to several of the other numbers,

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<sup>25</sup> OR, Track 10, 0:36.

<sup>26</sup> OR, Track 10, 1:01.

<sup>27</sup> OR, Track 5, 0:25.

though instead of acting as a romantic number, here the circular feel of the *ostinati* reflect Mr. Sheldrake's manipulation of Chuck into gaining access to his apartment.

This number not only reinforces Chuck's occasionally lighthearted nature, but also the dynamic between the two figures. The characters sing the majority of the song together; however, individual lines are parsed between them, and the treatment of each figure reflects their roles in the show overall. As the company superior, Sheldrake's typically demonstrates his dominance. He is often accompanied by the orchestral brasses playing at a *forte* volume, reinforcing his power and his masculinity. In "Our Little Secret," in a twist of dramatic irony, the audience is again privy to his ulterior motives, and as Sheldrake tells Chuck to "just put (your) trust in me," his accompaniment is piano solo, mimicking a melody akin to what one might hear at a seedy nightclub.<sup>28</sup> Chuck, contrarily, when he sings alone in this number is supported by orchestral strings and the occasional muted brass stinger. Chuck's continuously optimistic musical support throughout further demonstrates his willingness to please his boss.

Chuck also sings with his neighbor, Dr. Dreyfuss, who is integral in bringing Chuck and Fran together when he saves her life. Dreyfuss is suspicious of Chuck throughout the course of the show, because he sees a bevy of women entering and leaving his apartment. Because of the neighbor's reservations, he makes many sarcastic remarks at Chuck's expense, making him one of the prominent comic relief characters. However, the doctor is also a compassionate man, spending time helping Fran to recover and expecting nothing in return for his troubles. While not the most musical character of the production, he does sing a duet with Chuck, "A Young Pretty Girl Like You," extolling Fran's potential and virtues. The comical, patter number features the heaviest use

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<sup>28</sup> OR Track 5, 1:14.

of high woodwinds (flute, oboe, and clarinet) in the entire show, primarily playing countermelodies during the verses and stingers (along with the brasses) during the refrains.<sup>29</sup> This number also features the electric organ on the refrains, playing in tandem with the vocal parts, in the same vein as in the earlier duet between Chuck and Marge.<sup>30</sup> The last refrain also takes on a Western character for a few bars, with the electric bass playing a short riff under the doctor's vocals.<sup>31</sup> The constantly changing treatment of instrumentation and style not only reflects the two men trying multiple ways to cheer Fran up, but also demonstrates their comical sides.

### **The Score: Fran**

The catalyst for Chuck's progression in the show, Fran Kubelik is a young woman working for Mr. Sheldrake, the head of Consolidated Life.<sup>32</sup> Lacking self-esteem, and admitting through both dialogue and song that she does not like to do activities alone, Fran enters into a relationship with her boss prior to the start of the show. She becomes heartbroken by several of his repeated behaviors, most consistently his returning to his wife and children. At the beginning of the show, Fran is portrayed as dismissive and flaky, barely remembering Chuck's name until she begins to notice his kinder treatment of her, and transforms, through her relationship with Chuck, into a more mature character.

Chuck continually tells Fran he thinks highly of her, despite her contradicting him, and this earnest perseverance eventually convinces her that Chuck is the right choice for a romance. She ponders over the course of the action whether the relationship with Sheldrake is the healthiest option, airing her grievances to the audience in the number "Knowing When to Leave." The song

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<sup>29</sup> OR, Track 15, 0:11.

<sup>30</sup> OR, Track 15, 0:28.

<sup>31</sup> OR, Track 15, 1:48.

<sup>32</sup> In the original film, Fran operates an elevator, whereas in the stage version she instead works in the company's cafeteria.



itself is primarily in a major mode as Fran opines, uttering such phrases as “knowing when to leave may be the smartest thing that anyone can learn” and “keep both eyes on the door, never let it get out of sight.” The song, beginning in G Major and ending with an F Major chord, progresses in an ambiguous manner. As Fran comes to the conclusion that walking away may be in her best interest, horns and trumpets enter and play along with her, aiding in her (momentary) confidence.

Fran’s music by and large is texturally thinner in accompaniment than most of the male characters in the show, and even Marge. This distinguishes her both as a feminine character and as a meeker personality, save for a few moments at the climaxes of her solo songs. Accompanied primarily by piano and guitars, with little to no presence of drum set, her music is also higher in timbre, paralleling the singer’s soprano vocal range.<sup>33</sup> As a vulnerable character attempting to express her feelings throughout the course of the show, most of Fran’s solo numbers are also slow and lyrical. This approach to writing songs for her, then, does not allow the guitar to function as a solo, improvisatory voice as it would in most popular music settings, but rather as accompanimental, in the same vein as the piano.

Fran’s number “Whoever You Are, I Love You” demonstrates both her realization that Sheldrake is not an appropriate romantic partner, and her impending downward spiral. Texturally thicker than her other numbers, the song begins and ends with improvisatory piano, playing mainly repeated seconds and leaps of both major and minor thirds, creating an ambiguous atmosphere, reflecting Fran’s confusion.<sup>34</sup> At the onset of the vocal part, the piano continues to play softly and the chords changes are marked in the violins, but the focus is on the vocals alone at this point, and

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<sup>33</sup> The thinning of musical textures in numbers that are associated with female characters is a common element across several of the shows in this study. Please also reference Mary Magdalene in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Sandy Dumbrowski in *Grease*, and Catherine in *Pippin*.

<sup>34</sup> OR, Track 12, 0:00.

the words that describe Sheldrake. In addition to accompaniment, the orchestrational choices here also function as sound effects later in the number. At several points at the end of vocal phrases, the harp plays a descending arpeggio, a teardrop effect. As Fran is highly emotional, this inclusion is appropriate. Several songs in this production feature backup vocals by members of the chorus, and their participation in this number is especially noticeable, reminding the audience of solo female pop vocalists of the time, such as Cilla Black's "Anyone Who Had a Heart" (1964) and Dusty Springfield's "Son of a Preacher Man" (1968).<sup>35</sup>

Reflecting Bacharach's penchant for changing meter, "Whoever You Are" shifts from a slow four to a fast five as Fran changes from thinking of Sheldrake to becoming angry. The meter changes invite a change in instrumentation as well. During the slow four, the piano and strings are the primary source of musical support, and during the faster five section the drum set enters, supplying a more defined sense of rhythm.<sup>36</sup> As Fran is rarely accompanied by much percussion, its appearance here is important, signaling a change in her attitude from complacent to dissatisfied.

Chuck and Fran do come together twice, musically, commiserating over lost loves in the song "I'll Never Fall in Love Again," a surprisingly quickly-paced song given the subject matter of heartache. However, several markers of traditional musical theater love songs are less prevalent in this version, such as richer orchestration, widespread vocal parts, and tight-knit harmony. Instead, since this song follows Fran's discovery of Chuck's guitar, the accompaniment is primarily provided by the guitar and electric bass, initially supplying diatonic music, and as the song comes to a close, the accompaniment reverts back to guitars alone. Two other groups of

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<sup>35</sup> "Anyone Who Had a Heart" was written by Bacharach and David for Dionne Warwick in 1963, though Black's version initially had more success. Springfield also recorded several songs written by Bacharach and David that performed well on the charts, but did not feature backup singers, including "I Just Don't Know What to Do with Myself" (1964).

<sup>36</sup> OR, Track 12, 0:54.

instruments appear in the number: horns and violins. The horns enter during the third statement of the verse as Fran sings, playing only sustained notes to contrast with the intricate guitar parts.<sup>37</sup> The strings, meanwhile, enter when Chuck takes over the verse by himself, sustaining while playing at a piano volume.<sup>38</sup> The added timbre again serves to remind the audience that Chuck is the more sensitive, romantic character of the two of them.

“You’ll Think of Someone” occurs toward the beginning of the show, before Chuck is aware of Fran’s ties to the boss. While she laments being in relationship limbo and ponders taking up hobbies without anyone to share them with, Chuck attempts repeatedly to suggest himself as a potential romantic partner. Fran remains oblivious to his overtures, though the audience is witness to Chuck’s true feelings. To contrast the two characters during the music, not only does the song contain meter and rhythmic changes—a slow duple meter for Fran and a faster triple for Chuck—to make it clear where one character’s line ends and the other begins, but variations in the instrumentation between the two characters occurs as well.

When Fran sings in “You’ll Think of Someone,” the number possesses a Western flavor, referencing musical markers associated with country music. The electric bass plays an *ostinato* that consists of a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note in the interval of a fourth, a typical walking bass line associated with a number of cowboy songs, including “Happy Trails.”<sup>39</sup> Though the parallel is made, the tone color of the electric bass, rather than an upright bass, reminds the listener of the temporal setting. The instrument plays quarter notes, with an occasional dotted

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<sup>37</sup> OR, Track 16, 1:17.

<sup>38</sup> OR, Track 16, 1:43.

<sup>39</sup> OR, Track 4, 0:00. This song was recorded by Roy Rogers and Dale Evans and was initially heard as the theme song for their Western radio program, before being released as a single in 1952.

eighth-sixteenth pattern at the end of a given bar.<sup>40</sup> This provides a steady pulse over the percussion, and the pickup pattern also is reminiscent of country and western styles.

Over these accompanimental lines, Fran's vocal further reinforces the link. Very much in the vein of Patsy Cline ("I Fall to Pieces," 1961), her melodies are short, four-bar phrases that can be divided more specifically into two-bar antecedents and consequents. Instead of a fluid, soaring melody, the line is primarily scalar, and rhythmically simple, containing the same material as the piano and guitar. Though the character is meant to be in an emotionally confused state, her vocals portray her as hopeful. Combined with the major mode and jaunty accompaniment, an expected slow number this is not. The musical elements suggest that, despite her reservations, Fran might have the potential to be happy yet.

In contrast, during "You'll Think of Someone," Chuck performs longer, more melodic lines, underscored with orchestral strings and synthesized organ. While the rock and country instrumentation in her portion of the song serves to show Fran merely thinking aloud, Chuck's more traditional instrumentation paints him, once again, as a romantic. His lyrical content similarly supports this claim, as he responds to each of her hypothetical situations, and asks "who that someone could be?" While the accompaniment worked in opposition to Fran, the instruments instead work *with* Chuck, the strings playing exactly what he sings.

In the 2010 revival of *Promises, Promises*, Bacharach's songs "I Say a Little Prayer for You" (1967) and "A House is Not a Home" (1964) were inserted into the score, performed by Kristin Chenoweth as Fran.<sup>41</sup> "I Say a Little Prayer for You," initially previewed as a melody in the overture, serves to allow the supporting characters the opportunity to give Fran their support

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<sup>40</sup> OR, Track 4, 0:08.

<sup>41</sup> Both songs made appearances on the popular charts in the 1960s and have been covered by numerous artists.

early in the show while she receives gifts from an admirer, known to the audience as Sheldrake. Like other numbers written for the character, this song features backup vocalists, played onstage by secretaries of the company. While the original pop recording does not associate Fran much with brass instruments, “I Say a Little Prayer for You” includes trumpets and trombones that make an appearance toward the climax of the number, functioning the same as in numbers written for Chuck, that Fran’s confidence is building.<sup>42</sup>

“A House is Not a Home” finds Fran alone onstage shortly after she discovers she is unlikely Sheldrake’s only mistress. Very similar to her other numbers in the show, the instrumentation consists primarily of piano and strings, with occasional backbeats in the drum set, a much more somber and subdued feeling.<sup>43</sup> The insertion of this number is effective, especially juxtaposed against “I Say a Little Prayer for You,” not only because of its lyrical content, but because it shows Fran reaching her lowest emotional point before she resorts to extreme measures.

### **The Score: Mr. Sheldrake**

Mr. Sheldrake is depicted as a brash, bossy head of the company who essentially bullies Chuck into trading his apartment for tickets to a Knicks game, insisting that the swap would be “their little secret.” He perpetually talks in circles around Chuck and uses code names for his dalliances, which initially works until Chuck realizes the figure in question is Fran. In an aside to the audience, Chuck even utters, “I wouldn’t want to pin any labels on him like ‘hypocritical’ or ‘unprincipled’ ....” Of Sheldrake’s two primary musical moments, which have been discussed above, one is comical and one is sad. He is not an entirely unlikeable character, as he does follow

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<sup>42</sup> *Promises, Promises* (2010 Revival), Theatre on Film and Tape Archive, The New York Library for the Performing Arts, viewed June 25, 2015.

<sup>43</sup> *Promises, Promises* (2010 Revival), Theatre on Film and Tape Archive, The New York Library for the Performing Arts, viewed June 25, 2015.

through on his promise to leave his wife and be with Fran, but the fact that he changes personalities and outlooks frequently depict him as the antagonist in a production with a lighter central conflict. Unlike several other shows in this study, where the conflict is war, death, a tyrant, or lack of livelihood, here the conflict is a product of selfishness.

Sheldrake has a few moments in the show where he openly admits to being lonely and sad. In the song “Wanting Things,” he expresses, after a revealing interaction with Chuck, that while he has a reasonably comfortable existence, he still wants more out of life. Portions of this number are also waltz-like, alluding to romance once more, including strong downbeats in the bass instruments and in the vocal line and repeating, circular melodic lines. The pickup notes to the chorus of the song are *fermati*, and are played also by harp and French horn. The latter instrument’s timbre gives the phrase “tell me” some pleading power, while the presence of the harp’s *glissandi* promotes the atmosphere of a dream or a short departure from reality.<sup>44</sup> This number is a stark contrast to Sheldrake’s other music, which more forcefully aligns with his depiction as both a powerful company head and a bit of a bully, such as in “Our Little Secret,” where he successfully dupes Chuck.

### **The Score: Additional Characters**

The other characters in the show serve primarily to offer counterpoint to Fran and Chuck. The secondary women of the cast appear to be less concerned with engaging in behaviors with married men, and do not seem to form with their partners the same attachment that Fran has with Sheldrake. The men of the office similarly display lack of a strong moral center, not only frequently sleeping with various women in the office, but repeatedly pushing Chuck out of his home. Because

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<sup>44</sup> OR, Track 8, 0:51.

their behavior does not change over the course of the show, their musical style and orchestration remains static. This includes repeated use of certain *ostinati* patterns that do not deviate from standard popular patterns. When Chuck at last refuses the men the use of his apartment, the various department heads converge on a song, lamenting their loss of space and trying to devise a plan. “Where Can You Take a Girl” is another comic number, and thus has similar instrumentation to the duet between Chuck and Dreyfuss.

Without any lessons learned, the executives finish the show espying a new member of the company to hassle for a trysting space. Their New Year’s Eve conversation on whether the young man is single, impressionable, and has a nice place is bookended with holiday cheer. The show features two holiday songs, “Turkey Lurkey Time” and “Christmas Day.” The former occurs during the company’s Christmas party and is an upbeat ensemble number featuring full participation by the orchestra pit. The latter occurs when Sheldrake leaves Fran in Chuck’s care following her suicide attempt so he can be at home with his wife and children; it is one of the more somber numbers in the show. Another waltz, though quite slow and largely in a minor mode, the song is reminiscent of “Christmas Time Is Here,” featured in *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (1965). The accompaniment is reliant mainly on piano and strings, which only become active on lines where images such as bells are mentioned, functioning as text painting.<sup>45</sup>

## **Reception**

When *Promises, Promises* premiered, many aspects of the production, including the score, Neil Simon’s witty script, and the performance of Jerry Orbach as Chuck, were praised.

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<sup>45</sup> OR, Track 14, 0:35.

Bacharach's music in particular came to be viewed as a "bridge" between the music of Richard Rodgers and pop music.

Critics at the time labeled *Promises, Promises* as a rock musical primarily because of the use of amplification of the voices, which they associated with popular styles rather than traditional theater music, because the approach was less common. As rock instruments became integrated, and because electric guitars and synthesizers in particular allow for amplification and distortion capabilities, shows whose scores incorporated those techniques immediately became categorized as rock, whether such a designation fit the dominant musical style or not. *Promises, Promises* was therefore the first recognized time that such aspects of pop music, including backup choruses, had been used in a popular show, with amplification becoming a staple of productions in the decades since.

The score was also regarded highly because it was unexpected, and reminded some reviewers of music they might hear in commercial jingles. However, Bacharach was adamant that he not be considered a "rock" composer:

But I don't like to be called a 'rock' composer. I never wrote a rock and roll song in my life. I didn't try to compose a score just to be commercial. I wrote just the way I always do. I didn't compromise or change gears just because it was Broadway, but I tried to give the audience songs they could remember. I write very simply. If we knocked down a few doors with my rhythms, or the new sound in the show, great. Show music has to move on, but I don't mean in the direction of 'Hair.'<sup>46</sup>

Bacharach stated that he did not like the music of *Hair*, considering it derivative rather than progressive.<sup>47</sup> He similarly admitted in interviews about *Promises, Promises* that he had no further

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<sup>46</sup> Reed, "Burt Bacharach: No More 'Promises.'"

<sup>47</sup> Reed, "Burt Bacharach: No More 'Promises.'"



plans to work on stage musicals because he found his experience draining, and as of the writing of this dissertation, aside from additional music or revues, he has not completed full scores for any subsequent shows. While some reviewers did not much care for his score for *Promises, Promises*, drawing on expectations of either previous theatrical scores or Bacharach's other music, most critics cited the music as one of the most compelling aspects of the production.

As previously mentioned, *Promises, Promises* was revived on Broadway in 2010, starring Sean Hayes as Chuck, Kristin Chenoweth as Fran, and Tony Goldwyn as Sheldrake. The revival's orchestrations were completed by Jonathan Tunick himself rather than involve someone completely new. Much of the central instrumentation from the original production remained intact; only the new numbers required complete orchestrating. Tunick was nominated for a Tony Award for Best Orchestrations in 2010, though he lost to David Bryan and Daryl Waters for *Memphis*. As the award has only been presented since 1997, he was not eligible for a nomination during *Promises, Promises*' initial run.

## **Conclusion**

A throwback in tone to screwball comedies of the 1930s and a departure from the pessimistic vision of living in America in the 1960s as presented by *Hair*, *Promises, Promises* borrowed from the popular musical palette in a retroactive way. Instead of then-modern hardships like war and race relations, the show focused on a classic conflict: boy loves girl and girl loves someone else. The rock instrumentation placed the action well into the twentieth century, but aside from timbral flavor, did little else to enhance the characters.

The less intricate nature of *Promises, Promises* allows for parallels to other shows in this study, particularly *Grease* (1972). Where the former show was built around a pre-existing plot and

the latter helped to evoke the high school experience, both drew specifically from pop references. What differentiates these productions is that Bacharach's background drove the score to his show and *Grease* intentionally parodied music and musicians of the 1950s.

But the integral contribution of *Promises, Promises* to a discussion of rock musicals is due to its use of amplification and backup singers. Treating the orchestra pit like a recording studio created a different musical environment, and techniques with amplification and other technological advancements continued to become more and more significant in theatrical productions. Including a small collection of backup singers for soloists rather than the company of a production not only continued to harken to styles outside of the theater, but allowed for subsequent productions to use that technique to their advantage. This will be seen in upcoming case studies in this project, including *Grease* and *The Wiz*.

### **Chapter 3: Company**

“If it just becomes about doing...’synthestrating,’ as someone once called it, it is not theatrical. What’s so wonderful about orchestration for the theater is that you’re doing [it with] live players contributing to a live piece of *theater*—a live *performance*.” - Michael Starobin<sup>1</sup>

In 1968, *Hair* became a theatrical pivot point for rock-based musicals, and *Promises*, *Promises* allowed for a marriage between traditional and popular music to help the storytelling. Creative teams began to build shows using the approaches of these earlier works, gradually drawing on popular styles for inspiration with more frequency. Because rock and pop could allow for staging current or contemporary plots and characters with appropriate music, the early 1970s saw the construction of several musicals that were set in a modern context.

Stephen Sondheim’s *Company*, orchestrated by Jonathan Tunick, features rock instruments in a different way than most other musicals addressed in this study, though it follows in *Promises*, *Promises*’ footsteps. *Company* focuses on Robert (or Bobby, as he is called interchangeably, among other nicknames), a single man interacting with his friends who are in various forms and stages of relationships, including newly married and on the brink of divorce. Instead of a fully-fledged book musical, the show is presented as a series of vignettes unified by Robert’s unfulfilled love life. He is seen in varying situations with supporting players that demonstrate to the audience differing aspects of his character as well as his personal reflections on relationships and women. Rather than including overt rock music, the use of rock instruments in this show is subtle, becoming prominent only in larger group numbers or when made appropriate by a plot point. The

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<sup>1</sup> Nathan R. Matthews, “Orchestrators in Their Own Words: The Sound of Sondheim in the Twenty-First Century,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Sondheim Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 152.

rock instrumentation in this production primarily serves as a marker of time, suggesting to the audience the then-contemporary setting of the early 1970s.

Almost in reaction to the increasing number of rock musicals being presented at the time, this production falls into Warfield's third category of rock musicals, where it is eligible for consideration simply because several musical moments demonstrate rock's influence.<sup>2</sup> However, much of the show does not immediately suggest rock to the audience; this is similarly worthy of study as a comparison to other popular shows. For the purposes of *Company*, points to be addressed include the company itself (Bobby's friends), Bobby as an enigmatic protagonist, and the individual couples with whom he interacts. Additionally, references to earlier theatrical styles will also be considered.

Due in part to Stephen Sondheim's development as a composer, the score features an array of styles, including a soft-shoe number, a song recalling the Andrews Sisters, and the blues. While *Hair* presented a number of styles in its score, it was done with a limited number of instrumental combinations, and the orchestrations were completed by composer Galt MacDermot himself, who had a history with rock and world music styles. *Company* includes a much larger assortment of instruments in the pit, and Jonathan Tunick's background provides an additional perspective.

### **The Creative Team**

Stephen Sondheim's (b. 1930) theatrical background prior to *Company* allowed for him to be part of a great lineage of composers and lyricists. An acquaintance of lyricist Oscar Hammerstein II's family since childhood, Sondheim came of age in the 1940s, during the peak success of Rodgers and Hammerstein in the theater, including *Oklahoma* (1943) and *Carousel*

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<sup>2</sup> See Introduction, pages 20-21.

(1945). Considered Hammerstein's protégé, Sondheim first attempted to write a musical with schoolmates in 1945, resulting in *By George* in 1946.<sup>3</sup>

Seeing Sondheim's potential as a budding musical theater composer, Hammerstein initially became his mentor and later suggested he be given a position as an office boy during the creation of *Allegro* (1947). Despite not being a successful production, the experience gave Sondheim valuable insight into the process of crafting a musical and potential problems one may encounter in a given theatrical space or between members of the creative team. Sondheim also noticed during this time a convention employed by Hammerstein: the inclusion of a Greek chorus that is found in several of his works, including *Company*. In an interview with author Meryle Secrest, Sondheim noted:

It occurred to Oscar to use a Greek chorus as a chorus. I don't think anybody had put those two ideas together before. The chorus in *Allegro* is used not only to comment on the action but to explore the inner thoughts of the main characters; something two thousand years old, but I don't think anybody's done it in the commercial theatre.<sup>4</sup>

Sondheim attended Williams College, where he eventually became a music major, focusing more and more on composition. Fighting for a chance for his works to be seen and heard, with the backing of his professors, he was allowed to premiere *Phinney's Rainbow* in 1948, a satire on *Finian's Rainbow*.<sup>5</sup> Further shows and songs he composed as a student were derived from other popular and theatrical composers, including Cole Porter, to whom he was eventually introduced.<sup>6</sup> During his time at Williams, Sondheim also met Harold Prince, who would produce many of his

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<sup>3</sup> Meryle Secrest, *Stephen Sondheim: A Life*, (New York: Vintage Books), 51.

<sup>4</sup> Secrest. *Stephen Sondheim: A Life*, 54.

<sup>5</sup> Secrest. *Stephen Sondheim: A Life*, 69.

<sup>6</sup> Secrest, *Stephen Sondheim: A Life*, 74.

shows in decades to come, including *Company*. After completing his studies at Williams, Sondheim worked privately with composer Milton Babbitt, studying theater songs.

As a young adult, Sondheim was afforded the opportunity to be a part of the creative team for the musical *West Side Story* (1957), allowing him the chance to work as a lyricist with Leonard Bernstein, Arthur Laurents, and Jerome Robbins. He later was involved with *Gypsy* (1959), detailing the life of burlesque entertainer Gypsy Rose Lee. On that production, he worked alongside Arthur Laurents, Jule Styne, and Jerome Robbins, once again as a lyricist, for which he received praise. Sondheim's exposure to established figures in musical theater, his education from teachers such as Babbitt, and his own personal collections of recordings, ranging from classical to popular, all impacted his personal compositional and lyrical style.<sup>7</sup>

Jonathan Tunick's career began as part of the orchestrating team for *Promises, Promises*.<sup>8</sup> He met Sondheim prior to *Company* being announced, knew of the composer's recent work, and asked for the job as orchestrator outright. This initial collaboration proved successful, and following *Company*, Tunick served as orchestrator for Sondheim's *Follies* (1971), *A Little Night Music* (1973), *Sweeney Todd* (1979), *Merrily We Roll Along* (1981), *Into the Woods* (1987), *Passion* (1994), as well as the revivals of these works and other Sondheim productions, such as a revival of *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1996).<sup>9</sup>

The satisfying working relationship between Sondheim and Tunick led to so many collaborations. In interviews, Sondheim has said that he likes to give Tunick completed piano scores, with all melodies, countermelodies, and fills accounted for, though he trusts his orchestrator

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<sup>7</sup> Steve Swayne, *How Sondheim found his Sound* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005).

<sup>8</sup> Please see chapter 2 for Tunick's contributions to that show

<sup>9</sup> "Jonathan Tunick," *The Internet Broadway Database*, from <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-cast-staff/jonathan-tunick-12646>, accessed May 11, 2016.

to add in additional lines if necessary. He also has said that he does not give Tunick direct input on how to orchestrate his music, but rather describes the effect he wants to achieve.<sup>10</sup> Sondheim explained to Meryle Secrest, “I was trained as a pianist and I don’t know much about orchestration. I mean, I know what the instruments are, but I don’t really know anything about the techniques of blending them.”<sup>11</sup>

Composer David Shire, who thought Sondheim and Tunick would be a complementary team, explained:

I unhesitatingly recommended Jonathan. Because Steve’s music is written with a Ravelian transparency; if it gets thickened too much it loses the wonderful interplay of lines. Jonathan makes it come out orchestrationally with the same texture, feeling and sensibility of Steve playing it on the piano.<sup>12</sup>

The orchestrational interpretation of Sondheim on the piano features heavily in *Company*, particularly regarding Robert’s solo numbers or moments in which one character is featured against the others. The only circumstances under which the orchestra plays at *forte* and include nearly or all instruments are when the dramatic aspects of the scene require it or when there are no lyrics.

Tunick has acknowledged that orchestrating for Sondheim’s shows can be challenging. In an interview with author Craig Zadan, he noted:

Orchestrating Steve’s music is extremely difficult. *Company* was especially difficult because every song had to have a new style created for it. You could not pick a song and say this is the big ballad or this is the Twenties number. You cannot use gimmicks. Other arrangers that have orchestrated his music have not realized that because they don’t

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<sup>10</sup> Secrest, *Stephen Sondheim: A Life*, 198.

<sup>11</sup> Secrest, *Stephen Sondheim: A Life*, 198.

<sup>12</sup> Secrest, *Stephen Sondheim: A Life*, 199.

understand the music...Steve's music is unique. Steve's music is also written with full piano accompaniment and what the orchestrator must do is listen to the way it sounds on the piano, reduce the notes to basic harmony, and then reconstruct it orchestrally. The notes on the orchestral score may be very different from the notes on the piano page and yet sound the same. There are profound differences between the piano and the orchestra....I think it's also very important to be familiar with the lyric. I don't think the lyric is something different from the music. I try not to talk in musical terms with my collaborators. When I refer to part of a song, I'll always go for the lyrics rather than saying, 'Let's take bar four on the second beat.' I'll go for the lyrics because that's what really expresses what's happening, more than the note, which is abstract. But in a good song, the lyrics and the music climax at the same time.<sup>13</sup>

Tunick's approach to *Company* relies heavily on the lyrical content, which will be explored later in the chapter. His integral role in Sondheim's music was not disregarded by his peers. Ralph Burns, the orchestrator for *Pippin*, noted:

An orchestrator is very important for the sound you hear in the theater. That is, if he's not the usual Broadway hack—and there are loads of them around. But Steve's lucky. He's got one of the best, if not *the* best, working for him. Jonathan is simply superb.<sup>14</sup>

### **The Story**

Framed by Bobby's thirty-fifth birthday party, which bookends *Company*'s two acts, the show is presented as a series of vignettes. These detail his interactions with his coupled friends, each pair's respective flaws, and Bobby's own internal struggle with whether or not he is of a disposition to be in a permanent relationship. A persistent question provided by the other characters is whether or not Robert will settle down at all, as he has short-lived relationships with three different women, who are introduced individually. Over the course of the show, Bobby is witness to an engaged couple on the verge of marrying, a couple amicably divorcing, a couple trying to

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<sup>13</sup> Craig Zadan, *Sondheim & Co.* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1989), 155-156.

<sup>14</sup> Zadan, *Sondheim & Co.*, 154.



experiment with drugs to conform to the changing times, and a couple who allude to issues of infidelity.<sup>15</sup>

Scholar Raymond Knapp draws parallels between *Company* and *Hair* in the frank discussions of liberation, sex, and drug use. He continues to state that *Company* is shown through the lens of perceived adult relationships rather than explicit counterculture, and does not directly address several of *Hair*'s central themes, including the Vietnam War and civil rights. Thus, the scope of the show is much more localized than a production such as *Hair*. Bobby is instead shown to try marijuana with a friend and his wife out of pure curiosity, and appears before and after a tryst with a flight attendant and his struggle with whether he wants her to leave his apartment for work ("Barcelona"). The language is also much less risqué than the words in *Hair*, with profanity at a minimum, suggestive phrases made indirectly, and sexual scenarios portrayed through dance.<sup>16</sup> While the creators of *Hair* were attempting to be progressive and address then-current issues in a confrontational manner, *Company*'s relatability and familiarity lay in its contained plot and characters.

Knapp similarly points out the subtlety of Tunick's orchestration for *Company*. While including guitars and electric piano among more traditional reed, brass, and percussion parts—and supporting a pastiche of songs and styles while also alluding to urban rock—Tunick does not promote rock in the same manner as other contemporary shows, even shows which he helped to

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<sup>15</sup> Laura Hanson, "Broadway Babies: Images of Women in Sondheim," in Joanne Gordon, ed., *Stephen Sondheim: A Casebook* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000), 28. The author focuses on the female members of the company as representing various levels of commitment between a woman and a man and that each has one component of the ideal woman. Therefore, Bobby is unable to commit to any one woman, as the only ideal woman is a composite of the women in his life, and thus unreal and unattainable.

<sup>16</sup> The number "Tick Tock," written as a showcase for dancer Donna McKechnie, occurs while Bobby is with April, one of the women he dates.

orchestrate.<sup>17</sup> He avoids certain rock musical markers, such as repeated emphasis on the backbeat and extended guitar solos and riffs. *Company* instead combines the timbres of rock and traditional instrumentation, and focuses on stylistic, rather than timbral, differences. This is likewise seen in a show such as *Grease*, where the rock ensemble is consistently playing, but the composition of their individual parts creates differentiation.

While suggesting contemporary popular styles, the show also alludes to then-contemporary “classical” styles, such as minimalist music in the vein of Steve Reich. In *Company*, this involves taking several lyrical ideas, repeating them, and layering multiple ideas. This is most apparent with the opening number.

### **The Score: The Company**

A recurring musical theme present in the show involves the secondary characters attempting to get Bobby’s attention at his birthday party. An influx of the party guests calling his name, or variants on it (including “Robert Darling” and “Bubbe”), bears the accompaniment of synthesized bells, suggesting a doorbell. The fact that this reappears several times over the course of the show serves two purposes. Sonically, it gives the audience something that repeats, because the rest of the music is very individualized and not reprised, save for a melody repurposed in a dance number, to be discussed later. For dramatic purposes, the recurrence reminds the audience of the intended influence that other characters plan to have on Robert as the layering of statements of his name grows in intensity and volume.

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<sup>17</sup> Raymond Knapp, *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 295.

As the show opens, the cast enters while singing “Company.” This is the first time the audience sees all the characters together (save for Bobby himself, who is avoiding his own party and does not appear until later in the song). The number of people onstage, along with the fast tempo and words, indicates immediately how overwhelming these intrusions can become. The song features more rock instrumentation than many of the later numbers, in addition to the orchestral brasses and strings at various points throughout. The appearance of electric guitar immediately indicates to the audience the show’s contemporary setting and the party atmosphere. The later involvement of the brasses serves in part to enhance the forceful nature of the party guests, given their prior associations in the classical realm.

For the first portion of “Company,” the audience only hears the cast singing “Bobby” at various pitch levels, with synthesized bells and muted trumpets similarly playing bell tones.<sup>18</sup> The singing drops out entirely as the sound of an actual doorbell buzzing occurs.<sup>19</sup> Following this, the electric guitar and synthesizer begin to play an *ostinato* of straight eighth notes, later joined by the tambourine, which continues throughout most of the number, setting up a rhythmic pulse, an electric timbre for the audience to recognize, and creating further parallels to rock.<sup>20</sup>

Bobby has several moments of singing alone against the company after he makes his entrance, explaining his feelings. He mentions that the other cast members onstage are his friends, specifying that they are his “married friends.” Moments such as these are the only instances in the opening number where the majority of the rock ensemble drops out, and Bobby is left with just a synthesizer line as accompaniment.<sup>21</sup> This drastic change not only highlights Bobby’s isolation

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<sup>18</sup> See Stephen Sondheim, *Company*, Columbia Masterworks OS 3550, 1970. CD. Hereafter abbreviated to “OR” for “Original Recording,” Track 1, 0:06.

<sup>19</sup> OR, Track 1, 0:42.

<sup>20</sup> OR, Track 1, 1:26.

<sup>21</sup> OR, Track 1, 2:00.

from the other members of the party, but his contrasting personality. He is not as forceful as the rest of the company.

Barbara Means Fraser draws parallels between the supporting characters of *Company* and a traditional Greek chorus. She points out that, over the course of the show, the various performers provide commentary on the action, seen in Joanne's first number "The Little Things We Do Together."<sup>22</sup> Fraser also acknowledges that the company of characters, like the Greek choruses, function like voices in the head of the protagonist. This is particularly evident in the opening and closing of the musical, with the cast echoing Bobby's name over and over in the bell-like fashion.

Fraser states:

Just as the Greek chorus is responsible for opening a show and establishing the world of the play, so do Robert's friends establish the environment of this musical with a surprise birthday party. They make it clear through the first musical number, "Company," that the play is about relationships and Robert's journey, which his friends interpret as his quest to find a wife. Their world is chaotic and frantic, but his friends always have time for Robert....Immediately the audience becomes aware that this is not a typical musical comedy where marriage is the happy ending for which the hero and heroine strive. Sondheim's chorus is guiding them along, but the audience may be wary of the path.<sup>23</sup>

In a somewhat unconventional approach to writing music for the show, Sondheim did not write songs that purposely developed organically out of the dialogue. It was during his drafting process that it occurred to him that it would be more appropriate to compose numbers that instead gave some insight to the action or the psyches of the characters. Through a combination of

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<sup>22</sup>Barbara Means Fraser, "Revisiting Greece: The Sondheim Chorus," in Joanne Gordon (ed.), *Stephen Sondheim: A Casebook* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1997), 229.

<sup>23</sup>Fraser, "Revisiting Greece," 228.

necessity and an earlier fascination with Hammerstein's approach to writing for choruses in works such as *Allegro*, Sondheim created a modern Greek chorus in *Company*.

Along with "Side by Side," "Company" is treated as one of the production numbers of the show. Aside from "Tick Tock," a dance number created to highlight original cast member Donna McKechnie's skills, the remainder of the numbers in the show are more static in movement and action. In "Side by Side" and "Company," the cast physically lines up and spreads out to be on full display to their host. While this happens in each number, an extended drum break is heard, punctuating the action even further.<sup>24</sup> Since the former song immediately and unexpectedly follows Bobby's guests continuing to voice their opinions, it also conveys a sense of the lead's mounting insecurity, faced with all his critics at once.

The finale to the first act, "Side by Side," sees the cast perform a song recalling a soft-shoe, vaudevillian number from the 1930s. The song as a whole is tongue-in-cheek; despite its vibrancy and joyfulness, the song presents the positive aspects of being in a relationship and reminds the audience that Bobby is still alone. As a parallel to the opening number, the overlapping statements of Bobby's name over the accompaniment of electric guitar and synthesizer return.<sup>25</sup> However, Bobby then interrupts "Side by Side" to state, "I mean, when you've got friends like mine...."<sup>26</sup>

This number, which includes several references to earlier styles of jazz, also pays homage to shows like *Gypsy* (the song "Let Me Entertain You," for example), one of Sondheim's earliest professional ventures. The vaudevillian, show-stopping nature links to the theatrical scenes of the

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<sup>24</sup> OR, Track 9, 4:44.

<sup>25</sup> OR, Track 9, 0:00.

<sup>26</sup> OR, Track 9, 0:51.

earlier production, and the instrumentation, a blending of clarinet, saxophones, brasses, and rhythm, greatly suggest a jazz ensemble.

Initially, as Bobby begins to sing the main melody of “Side by Side,” the drum set enters, playing steady beats, the electric guitar supplies chords on the offbeats, and the muted trumpet performs a countermelody at the end of each lyric.<sup>27</sup> While this pattern continues for almost a full minute, eventually adding in muted brass and woodwind stingers, the rest of the cast begins to provide commentary. However, these statements have no bearing on the action of the scene, but rather on Bobby’s overall character. Some speak of his admirable qualities, such as, “He never loses his cool!” Some have a condescending tone, such as, “I always thought he should drink more...” And some comment on his looks, such as, “Isn’t he cute!” Though his friends are likely well-intentioned, the multiple viewpoints and opinions create increasing conflict for the protagonist, who could likely perceive their behavior as mocking.

While the main melody reappears several times, the music does come to a stop at two points. First, when Bobby remarks that he and his friends are “parallel lives....who meet....,” there is a complete lack of accompaniment.<sup>28</sup> This is the first reminder to the audience that not only do Robert’s friends believe he is lonely, but that he also recognizes he is alone. The second occurs at the climax of the number. The main melody returns again, though in a different form. The section proceeds at half the original tempo, with each offbeat punctuated by crash cymbals.<sup>29</sup> Both the change in tempo and the percussive effect remind listeners of production numbers that end with a kick line. In the same spirit, at the end of several musical lines, the singing stops and the silence is filled with sounds from tap shoes as a percussion break. This occurs twice with couples performing

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<sup>27</sup> OR, Track 9, 1:07.

<sup>28</sup> OR, Track 9, 1:52.

<sup>29</sup> OR, Track 9, 7:02.

varying rhythms, as a call-and-response of one person completing a pattern and one person answering with the same pattern.<sup>30</sup> However, the third time this occurs, Bobby performs a tap combination and there is no second person to answer him.<sup>31</sup> The resulting silence confirms his loneliness.

During a break in the middle of the song, the company sings “What Would We Do Without You.” Furthering Bobby’s othering from the Company, the music takes on the tone of a vaudevillian number, complete with crash cymbals, the vocal lines mirrored in the clarinet’s high register, a trumpet countermelody, and a walking bass line and slides in the low brass.<sup>32</sup> Keeping in line with the overall tone of the song as a dance-like number, the music is ironic. The lyrics suggest that the members of the Company could not get by without Bobby in their lives; the absurdity of the accompanying music serves to further reinforce their disingenuous veneers.

Several other musical features exist in “Side by Side” that differentiate it from other numbers. To give the song more of an early musical theater flavor, auxiliary percussion instruments sound; these include a ratchet and a slide whistle, both of which are used over the main melody.<sup>33</sup> In addition, the trombone performs slides and scooped notes at several points during the song. These instrumental effects come across as humorous, given the subject matter of the song: to be coupled is best and Bobby, in his loneliness, is not.

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<sup>30</sup> OR, Track 9, 7:13 and 7:25.

<sup>31</sup> OR, Track 9, 7:51.

<sup>32</sup> OR, Track 9, 4:14.

<sup>33</sup> OR, Track 9, 5:18 and 5:21.

## **The Score: Bobby**

Scholars such as Jim Lovensheimer suggest that Sondheim's theatrical *oeuvre* primarily deals with the idea of ostracizing or isolation, with one or more characters in a given show alone or separated from the rest of the company.<sup>34</sup> In the case of *Company*, Bobby is depicted as feeling isolated from the other characters as the only consistently single male figure, occasionally even being pitted directly against the other members of the cast.

As the main character and the least static of all, Bobby's music covers a wide range of styles and treatments. As he adapts to functioning alongside his companions, he tends to take on their musical styles, an approach seen in theatrical productions for centuries.<sup>35</sup> When alone, his music is often reflective, written in slow tempi and in a baritone range.

Despite most of the supporting cast having the intention of helping Bobby realize his potential, there are moments that suggests he is pitiable. A number entitled "Poor Baby" is treated like a jazz number with blue notes on clarinet. Much like "Company" and "Side by Side," the song opens with the same musical figure. However, instead of the overlapping words of his friends, which does not occur until well into the song, conversations between couples sound individually. Each time someone sings "poor baby," the orchestral strings play pulsing eighth notes.<sup>36</sup> This reinforces the sense of urgency that the characters display in their quest to find Bobby feminine companionship. The punctuating bluesy clarinet further accentuates the idea that Bobby's friends think he is sad about his situation. The nod to early blues and the style's association to feelings of

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<sup>34</sup> Jim Lovensheimer, "Stephen Sondheim and the musical of the outsider," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Musical* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<sup>35</sup> In Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, the title character takes on the musical styles of his conquests, in part to ingratiate himself, not unlike Bobby's function in *Company*.

<sup>36</sup> OR, Track 10, 00:29.



loneliness, loss, and sadness could allow a listener additional insight into Bobby's purported sense of isolation.

The final number of the show, "Being Alive," while technically a solo number for Bobby, and the song in which the audience expects some resolution, mainly features input from the other characters interspersed with Bobby's revelation. He comes to discover that the most important aspect of his life is to simply try to live as happily as he can. He is reminded of either the problems his friends face or their unsolicited advice that the audience has been privy to as well.

The song functions much like an "I Want" song, though curiously placed at the end of the show rather than toward the beginning, as with most musicals. Usually, characters present their desire as part of the catalyst of the action of the show, and the remainder of the plot involves the quest to achieve what it is that they want. The delay in arriving at this type of song suggests that it has taken Robert a good deal of time to figure out his feelings. The number calls for the instruments of the pit to be the most active they have been for one of his songs.

"Being Alive" opens like "Company" and "Side by Side," where his guests continually intone their views. However, this time Bobby tells them to stop, creating silence.<sup>37</sup> When he first begins to sing about his own views on love, electric guitar and keyboard play an *ostinato* under his vocals.<sup>38</sup> This accompaniment is not overly complex or *forte*, but rather offers a pulse; the most important element is the words. The basic idea of the pit creating a steady pulse continues throughout the song, though there is a distinct change of timbre. The electric sounds are replaced

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<sup>37</sup> OR, Track 14, 0:21.

<sup>38</sup> OR, Track 14, 0:28.

by orchestral strings almost immediately.<sup>39</sup> While this change is not overt, the switch allows for a different type of musical association for the audience.

The electric guitar and synthesizer throughout the show have been a component of Bobby's friends voicing their opinions. In "Being Alive," despite their continued presence, Bobby's views are the most important. Because they are different from those in committed relationships, different accompaniment is necessary. Additionally, the variety of classical instrument types allows for trading the pulsing rhythm between instrumental voices, moving between registers and colors just as Bobby moves between emotional highs and lows.

The disparity between the use of rock and traditional instruments is poignant here. For the majority of the musical, his friends have been accompanied by rock instruments and often read as insincere or shallow during their numbers. Bobby, in his most vulnerable moment expressing his feelings, and reading as honest and sincere as he vacillates between emotions, is accompanied by more traditional instrumentation. Not only does this mark a change in timbre between Bobby and his peers, but reinforce that Bobby is the character that, despite being different and alone, has more substance.

### **The Score: Sarah and Harry**

The first couple Bobby interacts with separately from the rest of the cast is Sarah and Harry. The two appear to have been married for quite some time and are portrayed as passive-aggressive. Purporting to be "on the wagon" with sweets (Sarah) and booze (Harry), the two bicker consistently. This arguing then turns into a karate demonstration, a hobby Sarah has recently taken up, and from which she emerges victorious, overtaking Harry after he requests a rematch. Two

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<sup>39</sup> OR, Track 14, 0:50.

musical numbers occur during the course of this scene, interspersed with the action: “Little Things” and “Sorry, Grateful.”

In “Little Things,” the cast members who are not part of the scene comment, in the style of a Greek chorus, on behaviors that make marriage and relationships both a joy and a hardship. On the whole the song recalls earlier Broadway, such as “You’ll Never Get Away From Me” from *Gypsy*, employing primarily traditional instrumentation, with the addition of shakers as percussion. At the onset of the song, the bassoon plays an *ostinato*, which continues through the first verse, then reenters during the last verse. The bassoon’s timbre traditionally lends the instrument to playing either lamentingly long lines or bouncy, comical music, here performing the latter role. As the first motive heard is funny, this also characterizes the overall character of the song.<sup>40</sup>

Agreeing with each other about the state of relationships, the members of the company sing “Mmhmm” in unison at several points, creating a momentary parallel to country music, even employing an ascending slide in the bassoon, an effect similar to slides on guitars and banjos in the genre.<sup>41</sup> The character of the song changes again, as the accompaniment switches to brass stingers and woodwind slurs, creating a temporary feeling of jazz.

Bobby asks Harry if he is ever sorry that he is married. While Harry does answer in the affirmative, he also acknowledges that Sarah herself makes everything worth it. “Sorry, Grateful,” is one of the ballads of the show in which Bobby is not directly involved, again accompanied by the orchestral instruments rather than the rock ensemble. As Harry sings, a flute and clarinet countermelody occurs over a bass line provided by the synthesizer and low brass. Every time he

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<sup>40</sup> The opening bassoon *ostinato* also appears in Sondheim’s *Into the Woods*, functioning the same way in the song “Moments in the Woods.”

<sup>41</sup> OR, Track 2, 0:38.

sings, “nothing to do with, all to do with her,” the upper exactly mimic his vocal line. While the song is mainly traditionally orchestrated, a recurring motive of a *glissando* in the synthesizer and guitar appears at several points at the ends of phrases such as “then she walks in.”<sup>42</sup> The gesture reads as though the men of Bobby’s company become elated when they see or interact with their respective partners. This moment at first appears as a genuine reaction; as the musical progresses and the audience learns more about the presented relationships, this could be perceived as a false front for several men, including David.

At the end of the first vignette, Bobby has borne witness to a couple who acknowledge that married, or committed, life is difficult, but the right partner is well worth it. This moral is explored in several other Sondheim musicals as well, including with the Baker and his wife in *Into the Woods* and George and Dot in *Sunday in the Park with George*. Sondheim has remarked that “*Company* says very clearly that to be emotionally committed to somebody is very difficult, but to be alone is impossible.”<sup>43</sup> In *Company*, Bobby is consistently reminded, through both seeing his friends and being told by them, that he experiences loneliness.

### **The Score: Amy and Paul**

Amy and Paul are Bobby’s friends who are about travel to the church to be married. While both are nervous about getting married, Amy’s case of cold feet is so severe that she insists that she will not show up to the wedding. In her number, “Getting Married Today,” the focus is on the rapidity of her words of doubt rather than a specific melody line, a traditional patter song to reflect her fright. To further reinforce her nerves as well as her vocal range, the high woodwinds and high orchestral strings play a series of scalar runs, both ascending and descending, reflecting mixed

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<sup>42</sup> OR, Track 3, 0:24.

<sup>43</sup> Secrest, *Stephen Sondheim: A Life*, 191.

emotions and split attention. As she continues, asking the listeners to pardon her, the instruments begin to play *tremolos*, a musical device often used to reflect subtle panic. The number also includes sound effects of thunder and rain supplied by the percussion, which Amy takes as a bad omen.

“Getting Married Today” is interspersed with a recurring portion of music that features Jenny singing, “Bless this Day.” Whereas Amy’s portion of the song reflects her high anxiety at the prospect of becoming married, Jenny’s is much calmer, demonstrating a breadth of attitudes toward marriage. To further emphasize the difference in tone between sections, most of the orchestral instruments, save strings playing *pizzicato* descending lines, are replaced by the synthesized organ providing sustained notes.<sup>44</sup> This foreshadows the wedding’s location in a church through both the use of the lyric “bless” and the presence of the organ, as well as acknowledging standard bridal melodies such as Pachelbel’s canon through the use of the strings.

### **The Score: Joanne**

One of the more poignant numbers in the show, made more notable in the casting of Elaine Stritch in the original production, is “The Ladies Who Lunch.” The character Joanne and her husband, Larry, appear in their chapter of the show out for an evening with Robert. Larry is argumentative and distant, exiting the stage, and leaving the other two together onstage. Joanne, who earlier tells Robert he is weak, is well aware of the problems with her husband, and in addition to making a pass at Bobby, she details the lives of women who do not have to worry about maintaining a certain lifestyle.

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<sup>44</sup> OR, Track 8, 1:27.

The onset of the number features a synthesizer and woodwind drone. Instead of busy lines, the soft drone allows the audience to focus on the lyrics with tonal support. The mode of the song is initially minor, reinforcing her unhappiness. Joanne then proceeds to detail how she views the lives of rich women, who have opted to marry for money, allowing them freedom to play. At several points during the course of the song, she sings, “I’ll drink to that.” With the line’s first occurrence, the tempo picks up slowly, and the instruments gain in volume. While still not supplying countermelodies, the increased presence of the pit allows Joanne to become more emotional about her apparent plight. At the very climax of the song, the brass enter to play stingers, which then show an emboldened Joanne.

“The Ladies Who Lunch” is performed over a consistent tango rhythm in the first half of the song, played by the electric bass. The tango, a dance traditionally associated with sex, lust, and physical closeness, subliminally conveys Joanne’s innate sexuality. Throughout the show, she continually jokes about the number of husbands she has had and supplies many of the more suggestive lyrics and spoken dialogue.

Fraser suggests Joanne is the leader of *Company*’s Greek chorus, otherwise known as the *coryphaeus*.<sup>45</sup> This is in part because she is one of the more prominent secondary characters, being outspoken, having a solo number, and performing much of “The Little Things You Do Together.” Joanne is also the most experienced member of the company, being the oldest of the women, and the most often married. The knowledge she has gained regarding life and love make her a good candidate as a leader, and likewise allow her to be Bobby’s most valuable resource for advice.

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<sup>45</sup> Fraser, “Revisiting Greece,” 228.

### **Unaccompanied Moments**

Two couples are featured in scenes that do not include a musical number. The first, Susan and Peter, have Bobby over for a visit and are standing outside on their balcony. Bobby remarks on their synchronicity and what a find Susan was for Peter. Positing “let me be the first to know if you ever get a divorce,” they acknowledge that he is indeed the first to know. The two continue to appear amiable with one another, however.

In the following scene, Robert visits with Jenny and David, a young married couple with children. While they confirm that they feel “square,” they attempt to be open-minded and Jenny introduces a joint she has been keeping. While the scene opens with the promise of comedy, the mood at its conclusion is somber and disagreeable. The lack of music and moments of silence reinforce Bobby’s isolation from his friends, who can no longer identify with him.

Jenny and David have Bobby over for dinner. Jenny, looser than normal, swears, giggles, and begins to question Bobby about why he has never gotten married. Cornered, Bobby admits that he doesn’t know. When Jenny suggests another round of smokes, David quietly tells Bobby that she did not really enjoy it. When Robert replies that she seemed to like it, David insists she did not and that he “knows her—I married a square.” David then requests that Jenny bring him some more food.

David goes on to tell Bobby that his wife is also “dumb.” This scene has been read in several different ways, though several scholars, including John Olson, suggest undertones of codependency and spousal abuse. These concepts are not directly addressed in the dialogue, nor do any musical numbers offer insight. However, the tension and lack of respect for Jenny displayed in this scene allows the audience to weigh various interpretations that could make subsequent

scenes and musical numbers appear possibly ironic as unhappy couples attempt to give Robert relationship advice. Bobby is then exposed to the idea of a couple purporting to know each other so well and still having problems because Jenny and David seem unhappy.

### **The Score: The Girlfriends**

Bobby has something resembling a love life, juggling relationships with three different women. The first time the audience is privy to these characters, they sing a number in the same vein as the Andrews Sisters, fast-paced and in close harmony. The song, “Drive a Person Crazy,” details Bobby’s habits that in turn make them unhappy. At the onset of the song, which has little accompaniment, woodwind stingers occur on certain words or syllables, such as the vocalists singing “doo.” The percussion is supplied primarily by the high hat, creating a jazzy association. While the song functions comically, the three women grow annoyed by the climax of the song, highlighted by the brasses. Perhaps acknowledging early 1960s female vocal groups such as the Dixie Cups in the tight-knit harmony, the three girlfriends come together on an iteration of “knock, knock, is anybody there?”<sup>46</sup> In the style of someone knocking on the door, after the words, a percussionist strikes the wood block twice.

The first of the potential girlfriends the audience meets individually is Marta. Her musical moment explains her relationship to the subway, where she observes people traveling between destinations. The number opens with synthesizer and bass playing short runs, signifying the running of the train itself. The consistent fast pacing of the number further reinforces the idea of a moving train.

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<sup>46</sup> OR, Track 4, 1:11.



The audience sees Bobby at his most vulnerable when dealing with April, the flight attendant. Not the brightest girl, he is nonetheless charmed by her and spends the night with her in his apartment. When she arises to leave the next morning, the two engage in a circular conversation, in which he repeatedly asks her where she is going, and she responds simply, “Barcelona.” This number is one of the show’s few ballads, featuring long lyrical lines played by the strings, particularly the cello.<sup>47</sup> The electric bass and guitar play off one another in this number as well, with the bass playing downbeats and the guitar filling in the rest of the bar in triple meter, creating a composite Latin dance rhythm, acknowledging her destination of Spain. The presence of both groups of instruments here allows for the overall tone of a traditional love song with the added benefit of reminding the audience of the temporal setting.

The last of the girlfriends the audience meets is Kathy. She is outwardly desperate to get married. While Bobby only briefly interacts with Marta, and a scene is devoted to his possible feelings for April, Kathy is shown giving him an ultimatum. Because Bobby appears to be unable to commit, she plans to move to Vermont to seek out a settled future. This is another scene with no featured song. Like in the scene with Jenny and David, Robert receives harsh criticism that enhances his sense of isolation. While Kathy does not have a solo number, she does participate in a dance number.

As previously mentioned, “Tick Tock” was initially inserted as a dance number for Donna McKechnie.<sup>48</sup> A reimagining of “Poor Baby,” the number that immediately precedes it, the instrumentation increases to include a full jazz ensemble.<sup>49</sup> Rather than lyrics, a pre-recorded track

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<sup>47</sup> OR, Track 12, 1:38.

<sup>48</sup> McKechnie was a renowned dancer during the 1960s and ‘70s and was a favorite dancer and ex-wife of choreographer Michael Bennett (they were married from 1976-77), who staged this production and was the director and choreographer for *A Chorus Line*, basing one of the main characters on McKechnie.

<sup>49</sup> In subsequent productions of the show, this number has been cut entirely.

of dialogue plays on top of the music, creating a parallel to *Promises, Promises*' technological advancements. The music stops momentarily when the female voice states "I love you," which is followed with several strains of solo violin music. The male voice cannot return the sentiment, and his pauses are filled with chords in the electric guitar, a rock instrument playing at an evocative moment. The audience then understands that these voices are reflecting an interaction between Kathy and Bobby, as the voices of the other couples begin to be heard, stating their love for one another.

"Tick Tock" takes place while Bobby and April are together, presumably intimately. The music, combined with the choreography, stand in for the actions taking place out of the spotlight. The instrumentation is primarily a jazz ensemble, with trumpets and saxophones as the foremost instrumental voices, playing the melody lines from "Poor Baby." The drum set punctuates the ends of melody lines, functioning much the same as in other numbers, creating a parallel between unrelated numbers in the show.

## **Conclusion**

The overall progression through Robert's coupled friends moves from happily to unhappily married. Sarah and Harry, though they argue, are clearly in love. The music of their scene and the brighter, lighter, instrumental choices reinforce this idea. Peter and Susan, though divorcing, are on friendly terms. Amy and Paul, are getting married and the bride is nervous (reinforced by string *tremolos* and Amy's patter vocals), though after a conversation with Bobby, she is ready for commitment. Jenny and David are happy on the surface, but resentment lurks underneath. Joanne and Larry are caught up in a marriage of convenience with fidelity issues, reinforced by a somber song.

The individual women that Robert dates similarly provide an array of personality types. April is fun, but admits to not being particularly bright. Marta has a gamut of interests, but her enthusiasm and constant dwelling on Bobby is restricting. Kathy, who would likely have married Bobby in the past, has moved on to a new fiancé.

With the palette of relationship types and potential mates, it is hardly a wonder that Robert comes across as confused during the course of the show. This is further illustrated through his appearances at his birthday party. At the onset of the show, he makes an entrance, but cannot blow out the candles on his cake. At the end of the first act, with the help of his friends, he is able to blow most of them out. By the culmination of the second act, when the action reverts to the party, Bobby is not to be found.

Although the music for *Company* does not resonate as obviously rock, the incorporation of rock instruments add an additional layer of meaning and interpretation for the audience. The rock instruments in this production serve to differentiate Bobby from the company, provide rhythmic patterns underneath the vocal parts, and to reinforce a certain level of intrusion by the party guests. The approach of varying instrumentation to create divisions between characters, which appeared in the previously addressed *Hair* and *Promises, Promises*, will continue to be an aspect of this study henceforth.

## **Chapter 4: *Jesus Christ Superstar***

“In the Broadway production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* they buried the whole huge orchestra and rock group beneath the stage and then proceeded to bombard the audience with the music through banked amplifiers. In the spacious Mark Hellinger Theater it worked. The singing and the score sounded marvelously extravagant, matching the explosion-a-minute overblown production the show was given.” –Derek Jewell<sup>1</sup>

Andrew Lloyd Webber’s name is synonymous with some of the longest-running and most successful shows on Broadway and London’s West End. His *Cats* (1982) and *Phantom of the Opera* (1986), for example, have both held the record for number of performances at a given point in time.<sup>2</sup> Since *Cats*, productions are notable for lush orchestrations; technically demanding scores for both vocalists and instrumentalists; sets that extend into the houses of theaters; plots derived from literary and historical sources; and spectacle in the French Grand Opera tradition. The composer’s earlier musicals, however, mark an attempt to experiment with his own style, as well as the limits of what one could achieve with the orchestral pit in a theatrical production, demonstrated through his own orchestrations. With *Jesus Christ Superstar* in 1971, Lloyd Webber and his collaborator, Tim Rice, created a musical that incorporated rock styles into an operatic format and required pairing orchestral and rock instruments to produce its signature blend of timbres.

In contrast to the preceding chapters, *Superstar* allows for a different sort of conversation on orchestration. Instead of simply altering styles between numbers, the score affords individual

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<sup>1</sup> Derek Jewell, “Superstar subdued,” *The London Sunday Times*, August 13, 1972.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Viagas, “Long Runs on Broadway,” playbill.com, accessed September 21, 2015. At the time of access, Viagas stated that, for longest Broadway runs, *Phantom of the Opera* holds the record with over 11,000 performances, while *Cats* is third with just under 7500.

characters their own signature styles, and rock music serves also to signify changes in mood. Topics for further consideration in this chapter include a discussion of Jesus himself as a character whose music, and thus, instrumentation, varies depending on the mood he is conveying, as well as Judas, whose depiction as an antiheroic betrayer is primarily supported with rock music. Mary Magdalene's role as the sole featured female will be similarly addressed, given that her station calls for a different musical approach. The roles of the antagonists, and how the orchestrations serve to inform the audience of their respective natures, will be surveyed, as well as the use of recurring themes, or *leitmotifs*, that appear throughout the musical.

It is also worth noting that this is the only musical considered here that is not a wholly American product, but of British origin. It is likewise important that, while the other case studies here were intended to be stage shows from their conception, *Superstar*, as will be discussed, was released first as a single track and then a concept album. This makes musical discussion somewhat difficult as the orchestral capabilities Lloyd Webber and Rice could achieve in a studio did not translate efficiently to the pit in a theater, though substantial effort was made to allow for the transition.

### **The Creative Team**

Andrew Lloyd Webber was raised in a household of practicing musicians. His father was an organist and composer who taught at the Royal College of Music in London, his mother taught private piano lessons, and his brother, Julian became a renowned cellist.<sup>3</sup> Andrew sought a career in music due to his exposure to a multitude of musical styles during his formative years, witnessing

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<sup>3</sup> John Snelson, *Andrew Lloyd Webber* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 5.

professional behavior, as well as having an inherent desire to create his own music (which manifested in crafting songs and musicals for local neighborhood and school productions).

When Lloyd Webber began his professional career, he was signed to a contract with the Noel Gay Organisation, a music publishing company that printed and released several of his original songs. Through this connection, he came to the attention of Desmond Elliott of Arlington Books, who heard his song “Make Believe Love.”<sup>4</sup> When asked by young lyricist Tim Rice for advice on a writing partner, Elliott suggested Lloyd Webber as a potential match. Rice and Lloyd Webber immediately formed a partnership, despite Rice’s desire to write pop songs and Lloyd Webber’s penchant for theater music. In the earliest years of their collaboration, the two continued to develop separately, with Rice working at British recording company EMI, and Lloyd Webber continuing his musical studies at the Royal College.<sup>5</sup>

In 1968, the team was approached by a local music teacher, who was interested in a new choral piece for his students to perform at the Colet Court School in London. Lloyd Webber and Rice created a fifteen-minute-long cantata, which would later become *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, based on the book of Genesis story of Jacob’s son Joseph. The show was met with positive reviews, which later led the two to further expand the piece from a short choral work into a full-fledged musical. Lloyd Webber began crafting his own orchestrations then, a habit he has continued as of the writing of this dissertation.<sup>6</sup> The combination of Rice’s and Lloyd

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<sup>4</sup> Snelson, *Andrew Lloyd Webber*, 5.

<sup>5</sup> Snelson, *Andrew Lloyd Webber*, 6.

<sup>6</sup> Snelson, *Andrew Lloyd Webber*, 6. Also, as given by his credits on the Internet Broadway Database, the productions for which Lloyd Webber did not complete his own orchestrations, including *By Jeeves* (2001) and *The Woman in White* (2005), he is listed as either arranger (the former) or supervisor (the latter). “Andrew Lloyd Webber,” *The Internet Broadway Database*, <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-cast-staff/andrew-lloyd-webber-12073>, accessed September 20, 2015.

Webber's styles, an approach that would continue to appear in their subsequent joint productions, was then used to produce a new concept album and show.

### **Genesis of the Project**

Because the team had enjoyed commercial and critical success with a Biblically-inspired musical, their intention was to use the text as a source for a second show. Drawing on the Gospels, specifically, as inspiration, Lloyd Webber and Rice wished to set a portion of Jesus's life to music because they found his role as a political leader especially intriguing. They cross-referenced events from Jesus's last days according to the first four books of the New Testament. Later, they arrived at a narrative built from the most frequently recurring episodes and figures, though they excluded several characters, such as Jesus's mother, Mary. Tim Rice explained his approach:

I used the King James and the Catholic versions — whichever was handier — interchangeably. They're quite similar, actually. My biggest aid was Fulton Sheen's *Life of Christ*, in which Bishop Sheen calibrates and compares the Gospels. Andrew and I examined the books of the Bible — Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John — to write the libretto. Each book differs on their accounts. Matthew, Mark, and Luke seem more dependable, even though John is supposed to have been present most often. He tends, however, to lean more on the supernatural and visions. I only wanted to work from one established perspective, and the Bible and Bishop Sheen are about as established as you can get.<sup>7</sup>

It was similarly important to the two creators to ignore the divinity of Jesus, and rather focus on Jesus as completely Man. Part of this decision stemmed from the disillusionment Lloyd Webber and Rice had experienced growing up in the church, and they decided they did not want to impose a specific view about that aspect of Jesus on the audience, but rather examine him as a

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<sup>7</sup> Joseph P. Swain, *The Broadway Musical: A Critical and Musical Survey* (Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 317.

man involved with various social issues of his time.<sup>8</sup> Keeping with an overarching theme popular with songwriters and lyricists of the late 1960s, Rice and Lloyd Webber also wanted to examine Jesus as the leading figure of a movement and his interactions with political figures, in this case in the forms of Pontius Pilate and Rome.<sup>9</sup>

In this version of the story, Jesus is depicted as desiring to make positive changes regarding quality of life and attitudes toward others for the people of Jerusalem, despite warnings by Judas and the authorities to keep his activities subtle. Jesus seeks to give hope through faith in God and encourage self-reflection among his followers by making himself an example, both in his behavior during the majority of the show and his crucifixion at the musical's climax. Jesus's actions and growing following suggest insubordination to the city leaders, due to his entourage's perceived resistance to authority, and the leaders liken Jesus's methods to those of John the Baptist, and voice their impulse to publicly punish him. Jesus's story and reputation progress through several levels of authority (akin to local, regional, and state), and each figurehead questions his reasons for putting himself in the path of danger and creating a sensation.

Jesus's ability to cultivate a devoted community was one of the key elements of the Gospels that appealed to Lloyd Webber and Rice. His status reminded the writers of rock "superstars" who gained popularity and used the traction to convey political messages and propel movements forward, though their impacts were not usually lasting. Perceiving Jesus as an historical figure treated as a musical superstar necessitated a change in genre, moving away from typical church music as the foundation and instead composing in a rock-inspired style. Lloyd Webber himself

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<sup>8</sup> Jessica Sternfeld, *The Megamusical* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 19.

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Wollman, "Much too loud and not loud enough: Issues involving the reception of staged rock musicals." in *Bad music: The music we love to hate* (New York: Routledge Press, 2004).



served as orchestrator, opting to include both a rock ensemble and members of a symphony orchestra.

Tim Rice elevated Judas Iscariot's role because he felt he was an intriguing figure for the creative team to explore and around whom to build a plot. Not only was Judas the disciple that was the catalyst for Jesus's undoing, but also proved to be aware of Jesus's and his followers' reputations in the eyes of the authorities, and the potential dangers of such mindsets. Since the scope of the show was to include an examination of how Jesus and his devotees fit into a social movement, Judas's role was key. Lloyd Webber and Rice, then, intended to set as much of the show as possible with his point of view under consideration.

Judas serves to deliver framing commentary during the musical at the beginning and end, as well as provide a source of provocation over some of the decisions made by Jesus and the disciples. Following the overture, the audience is privy to Judas's bewilderment over Jesus's quick rise and growing notoriety, as well as the inherent dangers posed by these events. He proceeds to question household expenditures, which could have been better spent helping the poor. Judas then inquires why Jesus chooses to work alongside Mary Magdalene, who has a reputation, given her profession as a prostitute, and he later tells Jesus he is "jaded" for not realizing the consequences of his decisions. Though Judas commits suicide in the middles of the second act, he returns as a spirit to confront Jesus just prior to the crucifixion. Rather than offer resolution, Judas instead continues to question Jesus's actions, particularly concerning his lasting impact.

### **Building a Rock Opera**

Following the 1969 release of The Who's *Tommy*, the concept of a "rock opera" was becoming increasingly in vogue. However, the idea of what constitutes a rock opera and whether

or not rock music should at all be aligned with such a perceived highbrow musical term was problematic. Even the very notion of what could or could not be considered “opera” came under scrutiny at this time in the world of theater and theater criticism. Broadway scholar Ethan Mordden notes:

Some there are [critics and audience members] that resist the application of this culturally prestigious word to works by musical primitives, with their hooks and riffs and punk etiquette. Opera is educated, not to mention drug-free. But genius needs no diploma: it strikes in crazy venues. And ‘opera’ simply denotes theatre that is not spoken but sung. ‘Opera’ has no qualification clause requiring a music degree or opening-night top hats or Renata Tabaldi. If it’s through-sung, it’s opera.<sup>10</sup>

*Superstar* can indeed be described as opera, taking Mordden’s definition under consideration, and specifically noting operas that treat serious subject matter, which traditionally exclude dialogue. Not only does *Superstar* not include any spoken dialogue outside of Jesus querying, “God, why have you forsaken me?” while on the cross, but the musical contains serious subject matter with very few punctuating comedic moments. However, some of the sonic markers and formatting of numbers, to be discussed at length, read more effectively within the frameworks of musical theater and standard rock songs, allowing the production to be accessible to a wider audience.

Mordden also acknowledges that, “It may be that rock not only overwhelmed theatre music as the national sound but gave intellectuals something to feel hip about.”<sup>11</sup> In effect, not only was rock such a prevalent popular style that it pervaded airwaves, televisions, and recordings, and thus

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<sup>10</sup> Ethan Mordden, *One More Kiss: The Broadway Musical in the 1970s* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 14. Though many operas are indeed sung-through, there is similarly a tradition for operas that include spoken dialogue.

<sup>11</sup> Mordden, *One More Kiss*, 9.

made sense to eventually invade the theater, but it also affected how theater critics and attendees came to regard musicals. In earlier years, musical theater was geared toward a white, middle class audience, its musical feet mostly planted firmly in, first, Tin Pan Alley-inspired fare, represented by such composers as George Gershwin and Irving Berlin, and later more orchestral, topical works in the vein of Rodgers and Hammerstein. With the infusion of rock music into this genre, beginning with the aforementioned *Hair*, the sound of the theater changed drastically, as did the audience. As *Superstar* was in development during this massive paradigm shift, its reception was initially varied.

Some critics did respond positively to the changes in theatrical music, while others felt that incorporating rock—which was becoming more serious and including socio-political commentary—into a genre known for occasional kitsch made both the genre and the style inauthentic. Clive Barnes of *The New York Times* remarked in his review of the New York premiere, while acknowledging Lloyd Webber’s skills, that:

Most of the music is pleasant, although unmemorable. It has a pleasing texture, although the orchestral finale, which sounds something like a church-organ voluntary inspired by Vaughan Williams and Massenet may be a little hard to take for musical ears. The pastiches of the Beatles are far more acceptable, but this is not an important rock score in the manner of *Tommy* by The Who. It is, unhappily, neither original nor innovative.<sup>12</sup>

The format of *Superstar* and its point of origin also bring into play two other revolutionary aspects of musical theater history: the development of the “megamusical,” and the imported musical. Jessica Sternfeld acknowledges that *Superstar* includes the earmarks of what audiences

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<sup>12</sup> Clive Barnes, “Theater: Christ’s Passion Transported to the Stage in the Guise of Serious Pop: ‘Jesus Christ Superstar’ Billed as Rock Opera Music’s Vitality Asset to O’Horgan’s Work.” *New York Times*, October 13, 1971.

associate with megamusicals, such as “a sung-through score with no spoken dialogue, lavish and complicated sets, and an extremely emotional, larger-than life plot.”<sup>13</sup> She also acknowledges markers such as recurring musical themes, or leitmotifs, as can be seen in works by Wagner (often with some variation), long sequences of action that can be divided into smaller scenes, much like in nineteenth-century opera, and each character having their own distinctive style of music.<sup>14</sup>

*Superstar* similarly marked the start of a parade of imported European musicals, most of which can be identified as megamusicals. Though some earlier shows, particularly operettas, had been written by European composers and librettists, or had European subject matter, most of the successful shows on Broadway had generally been American in origin and substance, and had followed a dialogue-and-song format. *Superstar* was also the first true attempt at staging a show from a highly successful commercial recording, although *Tommy* was eventually staged.<sup>15</sup>

### **Creating the Music**

The first “staging” of this show took place in a recording studio after Lloyd Webber and Rice had released a single of the production’s title song to both praise and disdain from prominent religious groups.<sup>16</sup> The number came about by way of Lloyd Webber creating a three-note motive and inserting the name “Jesus Christ” syllabically as a placeholder. Rice suggested adding “Superstar,” as the term was so popular during the 1960s.<sup>17</sup> The redressing of Jesus as a rock

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<sup>13</sup> Sternfeld, *The Megamusical*, 9.

<sup>14</sup> Sternfeld, *The Megamusical*, 28.

<sup>15</sup> Ellis Nassour, *Rock Opera: The Creation of Jesus Christ Superstar from Record Album to Broadway Show and Motion Picture* (New York: Hawthorn Books), 1973, 122.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Braun, et al. (compilers), *Jesus Christ Superstar: The Authorised Version* (London: Pan Books Ltd., 1972), 11.

<sup>17</sup> The very term “superstar” was widely used in the late 60s and early 70s to describe entertainers, and a term linked to Andy Warhol, who is also credited with suggesting everyone will be famous for something for fifteen minutes.

superstar appealed to some listeners, including clergy, while other people who heard the record considered treating Jesus as such was blasphemous.<sup>18</sup>

Given the freedom the recording studio has over a theater in terms of number of personnel and the ability to lay several overlapping tracks, the “pit” that Lloyd Webber himself orchestrated for this album was, as Ethan Mordden points out, “rock sextet, Moog synthesizer, church organ, and a symphony orchestra big enough for Mahler.”<sup>19</sup> This mixture of rock ensemble and full orchestra reinforced the intention of creating a “rock opera” by including two juxtaposing ensemble timbres. To achieve the desired vocal ambience, the creative team’s casting focused on more popular artists, including Ian Gillan of Deep Purple and singers Murray Head and Yvonne Elliman, to record alongside the altered orchestra. Studio production took 60 sessions, totaling 400 hours of studio time and an overall cost of \$65,000.<sup>20</sup> While several smaller editions of the score have subsequently become available to use for regional staging, the original recording is the production that audiences knew, grew to love, and expected when they saw a production in person, despite its lack of practicality within the physical confines of a theater.

As previously mentioned, one of the main aims Lloyd Webber and Rice had in constructing this rock opera was to explore Jesus as man and political leader rather than solely as the son of God, though that perception of him is somewhat included through the eyes of his followers, who acknowledge “I believe in you and God” several times. The musical treatment, first applied in the studio, of traditional orchestra and rock ensemble further aids in enhancing this split by utilizing rock instrumentation when Jesus is behaving like his followers, and more traditional, orchestral

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<sup>18</sup> Nassour, *Rock Opera*. The author states throughout his book that the creative team received numerous letters and reviews from audiences, ranging from praise to offended, some including Bible verses and threats to shut down the show’s run. This is not unlike the reaction to *Hair*, when people were offended by the inclusion of nudity.

<sup>19</sup> Mordden, *One More Kiss*, 15.

<sup>20</sup> Swain, *The Broadway Musical*, 318.

instrumentation when he is being viewed through their eyes as God or savior. Likewise, contrasting timbres convey divisions in mood. When characters become angrier, they are typically accompanied by rock instrumentation, whereas when they are calmer, they tend to be accompanied by orchestral instruments.

Public perception of rock music includes its loud volume and aggressive tone as signifiers.<sup>21</sup> Jesus and Judas are representative figures for these associations at various points during the show. One method of utilizing the differences in timbre between the rock and orchestral ensembles serves to depict certain characters as protagonists or antagonists. More traditional instrumentation and lighter textures often are paired with protagonists, while the antagonists are supported by primarily rock instrumentation and denser textures. To study these threads in detail, a combination of the original cast album and piano/vocal score were consulted to draw correlations to a character's words and actions.

### **The Score: The Overture**

*Superstar* opens with an overture that introduces several of the score's main musical ideas. Due to the orchestra's inclusion of rock instruments, the overture also contains riffs and bent, or manipulated, notes that are typical of popular styles.<sup>22</sup> The opening section, which primarily features electric guitar, incorporates bending or flattening of notes, which also gives this portion of music a Middle Eastern feel, appropriate for the show's setting of Jerusalem, though it lasts a total of less than twenty seconds before proceeding into a different melodic idea. This portion is

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<sup>21</sup> Joe Steussy and Scott Lipscomb, *Rock and Roll: Its History and Stylistic Development* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Press, 2003), 17. The authors note that most rock styles are loud in volume, though there are many exceptions to this rule.

<sup>22</sup> See Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, MCA MCAD2-11542, 1970. 2 compact discs. Hereafter abbreviated to "OR" for "Original Recording," CD 1, Track 1.

also modal and subdued, which is unusual for the opening strains of an overture, and its ambiguous nature implies a sense of unrest. This music later returns to underscore Caiaphas and the other Pharisees when they are discussing how to handle Jesus and his influence, in that moment indeed linked with their distrust of Jesus. The final appearance of the theme recurs under Caiaphas's encouragement of crucifixion.

While the majority of the overture features electric guitars and synthesizers, traditional orchestral instruments are also featured. Often they serve to highlight or punctuate melodic lines, giving the music a wider range and fuller sound, but when the initial statement of the three-note “Jesus Christ Superstar” motive appears, the prominent instruments are high strings and winds, punctuated with crash cymbals. This section's sound is a complete departure from the rock-infused melodies previously presented, cementing the importance and differentiation of the “Superstar” theme. Otherwise, the winds play the role of accompaniment to the rock instruments throughout; for example, the brasses perform an *ostinato* under an electric guitar solo or the strings playing a swung, descending scale during the buildup to what will later in the show become part of Pontius Pilate's rant, “I wash my hands...” Since the majority of the overture features the rock flavor, the audience is then able to expect that soundscape throughout, as promised in the show's subtitle.

A technique closely associated with rock music — that of the groove and buildup — occurs at several points throughout the show, first heard in the overture.<sup>23</sup> This approach involves multiple *ostinati* layered with staggered entrances. In Judas's first number, “Heaven on Their Minds,” the opening *ostinato* is played on electric guitar and bass, before adding percussion and several other

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<sup>23</sup> Robin Attas, “Meter as Process in Groove-Based Popular Music,” (Ph.D. diss., University of British Columbia, 2011), 2 and 198. The author defines a “groove” as “short repeating accompanimental patterns” and describes “buildups” as “instruments entering the groove one after another or a few at a time.” A popular example of this process can be heard in the opening to the song “My Girl,” during which the accompanying instruments each enter after a few bars, playing different *ostinati*.

guitars in intervals of two bars. This motive later sounds in conjunction with Pilate's ordering the flogging of Jesus and with Judas's death, though with the latter, the pattern descends in pitch several steps and is thicker texturally than the first time the audience hears it, though it is still recognizable.<sup>24</sup> Because the instruments used in conjunction with this pattern are of the same family and timbre, this increases tension in the sound as individual parts are often indistinguishable, appropriate for the numbers where it appears, reflecting both Judas's and Pilate's frustrations with Jesus. With the instruments playing in minor modes and the drum set emphasized, the association of rock instruments with aggression and rebellion is supported.

### **The Score: Jesus's Music**

In order to frame his humanity, rock instruments accompany Jesus at crucial, often emotional, moments in his narrative, though often the ensemble primarily plays *ostinati* rather than exposed melodies, remaining respectfully out of the way. However, an example of his accompaniment by traditional instruments, such as strings and brass, can be heard in such moments as during his response to Caiaphas in "Hosanna."<sup>25</sup> In this instance, Jesus explains that his followers cannot be quieted and are full of joy, and brass fanfares represent their shouts. Fanfare patterns traditionally herald the arrival of important figures or express joy or victory, here reflecting both. Jesus is the people's figurehead, and the chorus continually reaffirms their beliefs and mood. Without a prevalent rock sound, this portion of the show is differentiated sonically for the audience, marking its importance.

Similarly, during his speech that follows a proclamation of faith by his followers in "Simon Zealotes," only piano accompanies Jesus, which parallels the vast majority of what he sings, a

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<sup>24</sup> OR, CD 2, Track 7 (2:34) and Track 8 (2:03).

<sup>25</sup> OR, CD 1, Track 6, 1:11.



threadbare sound in comparison to earlier music. During this number, he suggests his followers are blind to true conflict and foreshadows his eventual fate. As he continues into his lament for the city and people of Jerusalem, two guitars and percussion layer in, but do nothing more than serve to highlight his words by playing fragments of the melody. (Likewise, solo guitar accompanies Pilate during his dream in the first act, playing groups of eighths and sixteenths before the bass guitar enters with a walking line, and the main melodies begin in much the same fashion.<sup>26</sup>) This condensed sound with melancholy lines is a different type of departure from heavy rock music. Rather than the major, uplifting orchestral sounds that promote the chorus's perception of Jesus, the low volume and thin texture at this point in the show reinforce his humanity and his weariness.

Jesus has an interaction with a colony of lepers during a later scene, accompanied by a string quartet playing in a minor mode.<sup>27</sup> His lyrics during this section suggest he is aware of his impending fate by this point, including lines such as, "My time is almost through, little left to do." The string quartet mainly plays sustained notes and suspensions under the vocal line, creating a sense of tension and urgency, not unlike the droning electric strings that accompany the character of Caiaphas.<sup>28</sup> This is a moment in which Jesus is aware of his purpose and immediately precedes the lepers' cries for Jesus to heal them.

The only prominent rock accompaniment Jesus has is when he is upset or overwhelmed, and this typically consists of the first chord of a phrase and any necessary pickup notes (heard when he overturns the marketplace in reaction to the behavior of vendors and consumers and when he tells the lepers to heal themselves, both during the first act) being played by rock instruments,

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<sup>26</sup> OR, CD 1, Track 8.

<sup>27</sup> The use of a string quartet in conjunction with rock music had been heard previously in the Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby" in 1966.

<sup>28</sup> OR, CD 1, Track 9, 2:13.

before several beats of silence.<sup>29</sup> This approach also occurs with Judas when he confronts Jesus (“Every time I look at you I don’t understand”), and also with a third character, Pontius Pilate. While Pilate is sentencing Jesus to death (“Don’t let me stop your great self-destruction!”), the same approach is taken. The figuration appears to describe a character that has reached his breaking point. For Jesus, he sees the treatment of the marketplace as an affront to God and he is overwhelmed by the lepers’ pleas; for Judas, he is aware that Jesus knows of his upcoming betrayal and its aftermath and cannot discern why his actions and attitude do not change; for Pilate, he offers Jesus a chance to explain himself and find an alternative, and Jesus refuses.<sup>30</sup>

### **The Score: Traditional vs. Rock**

Over the course of the show, there are accompanying figures played on rock instruments that a listener might expect instead to hear from traditional instruments. For example, during the apostles’ reflection in the midst of the Last Supper, a broken arpeggio eighth-note figure played on electric guitar is suggestive of a harp. Soon thereafter, a sixteenth-quarter figure countermelody is played on a synthesizer (programmed to sound like an organ) rather than colored by high winds or strings, instruments that do not play at this point in the number.<sup>31</sup> Despite the unexpected scoring, it creates a reflective and reverent atmosphere while the disciples ponder their contributions to Jesus’s cause. This is also the case with Mary Magdalene in “I Don’t Know How to Love Him,” where a guitar (played acoustically) supplies accompanying arpeggios, also in the style of a harp.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> OR, CD 1, Track 9, 1:51.

<sup>30</sup>OR, CD 1, Track 9 (1:52) and CD Tracks 1 (5:11) and 8 (4:45).

<sup>31</sup> OR, CD 2, Track 1, 0:09.

<sup>32</sup> OR, CD 1, Track 11.

The traditional instruments themselves—winds, orchestral strings, and brass—sound at other points in the show against the rock ensemble, but invariably seem to somehow reflect Jesus’s presence or influence. For instance, when Mary Magdalene and other women are trying to offer Jesus comfort early in the show, their vocal melodies are *colla parte* in the upper strings, which serves to highlight their femininity against a primarily male cast. At the climax of Mary Magdalene’s song about her relationship with Jesus, “I Don’t Know How to Love Him,” her voice is once again supported by upper winds (including recorder countermelody) and strings.<sup>33</sup> The only noticeable appearance of bassoons in the score outside of doubling other orchestral basses is during the Last Supper, playing in thirds under Jesus, with virtually the same melodic shape as the vocal line. At that point in the ceremony, he serves Communion. The bassoons are soon replaced by electric bass, which provides the same type of support to Jesus’s vocals as he grows angry. The orchestral winds, then, are also used to highlight more “serious” or reverent subject matter.

### **The Score: Judas**

Judas, contrary to Jesus, primarily sings over rock instruments (and at times brasses), which could suggest a certain hardness about the character as well as potential antagonism. His lyrics generally contain angrier words, criticizing Jesus, which would not be matched well in affect by the softer orchestral sounds of the winds and strings. The very first meeting with the character finds Judas both berating and pleading with Jesus for his behavior and the safety of his followers. The first sound heard is a guitar *ostinato*, previously featured in the overture, which shall be referred to hereafter by the song title, “Heaven on Their Minds.” Subsequently, guitars, electric bass, and percussion gradually enter, layering sixteenth and dotted-eighth notes in a chaotic

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<sup>33</sup> Recorders and flutes were also featured in several popular songs of the time, including “California Dreamin’” (1966) by The Mamas & the Papas.

buildup to the entrance of the vocals. As previously stated, this “Heaven on Their Minds” *ostinato* returns two more times over the course of the show: prior to Judas’s death when he sings, “You have murdered me,” and when Pontius Pilate oversees the lashings to Jesus before his final sentencing.<sup>34</sup> It is also worth noting that this *ostinato* also makes use of a flat second scale degree, adding a non-chord tone to the sound, also suggesting Judas as a potential “other,” or outsider, in relation to Jesus’s character.

Though the last time the *ostinato* sounds, Judas is not a central figure in the scene—Pilate is—the use of a pattern so aligned with him makes sense for two reasons. First, it foreshadows the reappearance of Judas continuing to question Jesus as he carries the cross in “Jesus Christ Superstar,” serving as a moderately antagonistic character just as Pilate had been the aggressor in the preceding scene. Secondly, Judas is portrayed as a highly conflicted character, wanting to serve Jesus’s cause but also to protect himself and the other disciples. During the lashing scene, Pilate is likewise portrayed as conflicted, initially wanting to help Jesus, and when told he has no power, he reneges and sentences Jesus to be crucified.

Judas’s musical characterization is further aligned with Jesus through a borrowing of one of the compositional techniques Lloyd Webber employed for the title character. As previously discussed, when Jesus becomes angry or agitated, the pit plays chords on electric guitars, electric bass, and percussion on the first syllable of either each sentence or phrase. During the Last Supper, following an outburst between the two characters, Judas sings, “Every time I look at you I don’t understand how you let the things you did get so out of hand. You’d have managed better if you’d had it planned,” before ending the musical phrase with untexted wailing. These same lyrics are

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<sup>34</sup> OR, CD 2, Track 7 (2:34) and Track 8 (2:03).

also the first heard during the title song. The rock instruments, as they do with Jesus, emphasize the beginnings of phrases (or downbeats) with isolated chords.<sup>35</sup> The accompaniment serves to emphasize the lyrics that Judas sings.

Though Judas is characterized musically primarily as a darker character, he does have a moment prior to his death where he borrows the melody and selected lyrics of Mary Magdalene's "I Don't Know How to Love Him," which demonstrates his conflicted feelings for Jesus.<sup>36</sup> For Judas, the conflict arises from whether he believes in Jesus as a savior and what good his work has done more broadly. Whereas Mary Magdalene's accompaniment had been lighter and higher in instrumentation, Judas's is slightly darker and denser through the use of several electric guitars playing in a lower register than they had earlier in the show. This reflects not only his male vocal range, but also his defeated mood. During most of this section, electric guitars playing in a high register accompany Judas, with no bass or percussion, playing an *ostinato* that differs in register and in pitches from Mary Magdalene's earlier iteration. This is a massive change in sound for Judas, who has been characterized as a harder, more sensible character; however, the music soon reverts back to the "Heaven on Their Minds" *ostinato* first heard with Judas in the first act as he proceeds, somewhat angrily, to his death, with guitar, bass, synthesizer, and percussion in a gradual buildup, increasing in tension as he begins to wail, "You have murdered me!" The recurrence of the *ostinato* with a higher texture and timbre than his earlier music, then, represents a moment of clarity for Judas — he comes to the realization that he wants Jesus's approval and that he was specifically chosen to betray him. The reversion back to his earlier accompaniment style illustrates his despair.

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<sup>35</sup> OR, CD 2, Track 1, 5:11.

<sup>36</sup> OR, CD 2, Track 7, 1:27.

In Judas's most prominent song, the title number, the introduction, which harkens back to the three-note "Superstar" pattern first heard in the overture, sounds in the orchestral instruments, with the melody primarily in the strings. This orchestral interlude serves as a break between two larger rock-based numbers, the first of which is Herod's sentencing of Jesus, and then Judas's taunting. This more traditionally orchestrated section, then, promotes the idea of Jesus's difference, from both his earlier depictions in the show and other characters, as well as the importance of the act that is about to come. Almost immediately following the "Superstar" motive, the music proceeds into rock, and saxophones particularly are present throughout the bulk of the song, generally playing riffs under Judas's melody. This use of an upbeat tempo and a major mode is different than other songs written for Judas, which are modally darker and texturally thicker. The point at which he sings the title number follows his death and completion of his betrayal, leaving him able to observe and comment as a vision.

Judas's accompaniment includes several backup singers, often depicted as several choirs of angels singing in turn. As they sing a short motivic phrase on "Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ" and then "Jesus Christ, Superstar" using the main three-note theme, a more traditional instrument (piano) accompanies the first group of singers, while rock instruments (bass, saxophone) accompany the second.<sup>37</sup> When the two choirs join together, it is a mixture of both ensembles, including brass and mallet percussion, a musical celebration.

The title motive of the show, "Jesus Christ Superstar," appears only twice prior to the title number itself; once, as previously mentioned, in the overture, and again after Jesus has been sentenced to be crucified. In each statement, the instruments heard include high strings and winds,

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<sup>37</sup> OR, CD 2, Track 9, 1:08.

with timpani emphasizing the last part of the gesture, with a triplet and two eighth notes. The first time a choir of angels sings the phrase, they are accompanied by piano, and the second time an electric bass enters, mirroring the vocal line. The motive subsequently becomes more rock-based as Judas and the chorus describe Jesus as a “superstar,” with a greater presence in electric guitars and bass as well as drum set.

### **The Score: Mary Magdalene**

With Mary Magdalene’s role as the only featured female (as Jesus’s mother is excluded from this version of the story), her musical role, supported by instruments in the orchestra pit, is to add lyricism and a sense of gentleness to the score. Both of her featured songs, “I Don’t Know How to Love Him” and “Everything’s Alright,” as well as the later-added (for stage and the 1973 film) “Could We Start Again, Please,” contain longer, more lyrical melodic lines, slower melodic and harmonic rhythms, and the support of more orchestral instruments, such as strings, high winds, synthesized bells, and even recorder. At times electric guitars and bass accompany her, but they are not the featured musical sounds of her numbers. When accompanied by guitar, it is typically only by one and the compositional approach seems more folk-like.<sup>38</sup>

Mary Magdalene’s songs in general are texturally lighter than those the male characters sing, and the contrast both differentiates and feminizes her. In “Everything’s Alright,” electric guitar, occasionally synthesized organ, and drum set playing *ostinati* accompany her, and later high strings when she reenters with the melody.<sup>39</sup> Only when Judas enters to berate her for her frivolous use of oils and balms do we hear an increase in pit presence, including piano, bass, and

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<sup>38</sup> OR, CD 1, Track 11, 0:00.

<sup>39</sup> OR, CD 1, Track 4, 2:50.

additional percussion.<sup>40</sup> The thicker texture and the minor mode in this instance serve to solidify Judas's emotional state as well as his role as antagonist. Using essentially the same instrumentation, but thinning and thickening the texture to juxtapose the characters is quite interesting, especially given the similar ranges and timbres, much like the characters' individual statements of "I Don't Know How To Love Him."

### **The Score: Traditional Instrumentation**

Other examples of the use of traditional instruments to help set mood include when the crowd is singing "Hosanna," during which the brasses play fanfares to demonstrate the joyful nature of the early section of the scene, while the flutes and high strings have a sixteenth-note run, further lightening the atmosphere.<sup>41</sup> When Caiaphas appears to confront them, the clarinet and xylophone accompany him, also with a run, though this time in a minor mode, and with a notable change in timbre as a result of using different instrumentation. This distinctively dark cast to the music not only further reinforces Caiaphas as one of the antagonistic characters, but also adds tension into an otherwise happy sequence, foreshadowing the events at the end of the show.

Later, prior to Simon Zealotes suggesting Jesus make a concerted effort to oppose Rome and establish absolute authority, there is an echoing brass fanfare (of two eighth notes followed by a quarter note) played by a variety of trumpet and horns placed at different points in the studio to suggest surround-sound. This fanfare differs from the ones heard in "Hosanna" as they are lower, shorter and separated, and include minor thirds, demonstrating underlying tensions. The brasses reappear later in the number to play alongside the disciples' "Jesus I am with you..." declaration.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> OR, CD 1, Track 4, 1:13.

<sup>41</sup> OR, CD 1, Track 6.

<sup>42</sup> OR, CD 1, Track 7, 0:47.



This number also features the first fragment of baritone saxophone under Simon Zealotes, playing an *ostinato* for the equivalent of two bars. Following a synthesized buzz and the “Damned for all time” motive, associated with Judas and to be discussed presently, voiced by rock instruments, the motive is played as a fanfare along with Judas prior to his betrayal.

In terms of division between his followers’ perceptions of Jesus as divine and human, his most telling musical moment comes in the Garden of Gethsemane. In the introduction to the song, during which he inquires whether or not the disciples will stay awake with him, he is accompanied by brass choir, sounding in the style of a chorale, a very warm, reflective sonority. The brass reappears to echo several of Jesus’s vocal lines (“tried for three years,” etc.) as well as play descending scales that continue into new sections as well as reinforce several lines (the four-note descending “Why should I die?” motive).<sup>43</sup> The brasses in this number gradually increase in dynamics and number to help depict Jesus’s inner conflict. Jesus also has a vocal *ostinato* in this number, mirrored by the keyboards and subsequently high guitars, creating a buildup.<sup>44</sup> The song comes to a momentary pause with a combination of all the various instrumental lines layered on top of one another with no vocals, creating musical conflict to reflect the character’s turmoil. As earlier in the show, Jesus vocalizes with nothing but piano for accompaniment, before singing the climax of the song with a combination of traditional (strings playing the same line as Jesus) and rock (playing *ostinati*) instruments. The merging of the two ensembles reinforces both his emotions, as a mixture of angry, sad, and resigned, and his struggle with his role as leader and his obedience in serving God.

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<sup>43</sup> OR, CD 2, Track 2 (0:40 and 1:14).

<sup>44</sup> OR, CD 2, Track 2, 1:32.

### **The Score: Vocal *Ostinati***

In addition to hooks supplied by the instruments, *Superstar* features a number of vocal *ostinati*, another signifier of rock.<sup>45</sup> These are often sung by disciples or crowds, including “What’s the Buzz, Tell Me What’s Happening,” where the title of the song is repeated throughout, punctuated only by Jesus interrupting and reprimanding his followers.<sup>46</sup> The same pattern recurs during the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane. Another example is the second act’s *ostinati* associated with the phrases “Take him to Pilate!” and “Now we’ve got him!” sung by crowds, whose repetition reinforces the severity of Jesus’s situation. These patterns do not replace the pit completely as the instrumentalists play their own *ostinati*, such as an ascending line in the synthesized organ or a descending line in the electric bass. These musical gestures instead serve to reinforce the intended rock character of the song and convey the urgency of the disciples and crowds.

In “Everything’s Alright,” that occurs at the onset of the show, the disciples and other followers sing the title repeatedly as the song ends, with a gradual increase in accompanimental presence, starting with high strings, and then adding in guitars and bass, creating another buildup, this time the function being to reinforce how positive Jesus is feeling about the growth of his movement. Other examples of vocal *ostinati* include when Jesus is about to come before Pilate and there is an *ostinato* on “Now we’ve got him,” and when Judas dies, the chorus sings four-part chorale harmony on, “Poor old Judas, so long Judas,” initially over the “Heaven on Their Minds” *ostinato*, and then unaccompanied as the instruments gradually fade out.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> These are usually supplied by backup singers, heard in such songs as “Baby Love” (1964) by the Supremes, in which the accompanying vocals repeat the word “baby.”

<sup>46</sup> OR, CD 2, Track 3, 0:17.

<sup>47</sup> OR, CD 2, Track 3 (2:11) and Track 7 (3:21).

### **The Score: Rock Instrumentation**

As previously mentioned, Jesus is most aligned with definitive rock instruments and no orchestral sounds as he grows agitated or angry, and this approach appears in “Everything’s Alright.” For example, when addressed by the disciples with a barrage of questions, he sings the line “Why should you want to know?” before proceeding to calm them down. During this line, there is a chord on the first syllable of the sentence before the orchestra pit is *tacet*.<sup>48</sup> Once he begins to lecture his followers, primary accompaniment comes from bass, percussion, and the vocal *ostinato*, “What’s the buzz?” A similar figure sounds when he overturns tables at the marketplace, disgusted with the crass behavior. As he sings, “My temple should be a house of prayer! But you have made it a den of thieves!” much as in the previous example, the first syllable of each sentence is marked with a chord in the rock instruments, and the sentences are further connected with a triplet figure in percussion and bass.<sup>49</sup> These moments, along with Jesus’s response to Judas’s criticism of Mary in “Everything’s Alright,” are also cast in minor modes. Pilate likewise shares this figure after he offers Jesus help and he refuses, singing, “Don’t let me stop your great self-destruction. Die if you want to, you misguided martyr.” Like Jesus, Pilate’s accompaniment consists of the first syllables of his phrases being punctuated by rock instrumentation playing minor chords.<sup>50</sup>

In two conversations with Pilate toward the end of the show, first during the accusation and later the sentencing, Jesus’s attitude changes rapidly. In the first conversation, he engages Pilate more forcefully, accompanied by the high strings and winds that play the same melody and

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<sup>48</sup> OR, CD 1, Track 3, 0:17.

<sup>49</sup> OR, CD 1, Track 9, 1:52.

<sup>50</sup> OR, CD 2, Track 8, 4:45.

rhythm as his line “That’s what you say!”<sup>51</sup> in a texturally thick, minor mode, reflecting his defiance. In the second conversation, he has come to accept his fate and conveys to Pilate that he will not challenge any decisions. In this instance, he is accompanied by synthesizers playing a variation on the melodic line, somewhat less prominently and texturally less dense.<sup>52</sup> These changes in color/timbre of the pit reflect the sudden change in mood of the title character.

### **The Score: The Antagonists**

The protagonists of the show, including Jesus and the disciples, usually sing with the accompaniment of traditional or rock instrumentation with considerations made to range and texture, depending specifically on the character or point in the plot. Even when using rock sounds, the music is primarily in a major key, higher in range, and texturally fits the progression of the scene. The antagonists of the show, contrarily, are primarily treated with rock instrumentation or music that is texturally dense and minor, save for Herod, who is given a dance hall number, which Lloyd Webber perhaps included to lighten his otherwise sinister characterization.

The antagonists of the story, however, do not receive unified musical treatment. The three main antagonists, Caiaphas (and the Pharisees), Pontius Pilate, and King Herod, have in common only that they are meant to be perceived as threatening. Caiaphas’s music is in the lowest register of any vocal part, mirrored by the electric bass and low piano, and the mode of most of his appearances is minor. When he mulls over with the Pharisees how to handle the situation with Jesus and his followers, the initial accompaniment is only chords in the previously mentioned bass instruments.<sup>53</sup> As their conversation grows more intense, they sound primarily in conjunction with

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<sup>51</sup> OR, CD 2, Track 5, 1:22.

<sup>52</sup> OR, CD 2, Track 8, 3:55.

<sup>53</sup> OR, CD 1, Track 5.

guitar and percussion, playing variations on their vocal lines, with the piano performing the same rhythm as the vocals but in varying changing intervals with the vocalist. Every time there is an iteration of “He is dangerous” throughout their number, one hears piano and drum set only, playing the exact rhythm (and melody in the piano) as the vocals. When Caiaphas later returns to discuss Jesus with Pilate just prior to the lashing and crucifixion, low chords return, as well as the opening quotation of the overture, which parallels his vocal line, on electric guitar.<sup>54</sup>

Pilate, meanwhile, has a mixture of accompanying voices and styles that help define him. When we first see him following a disturbing dream that foreshadows the events at the end of the show, we hear an electric guitar functioning like a harp. However, in his next appearance before the audience, when he sends Jesus to Herod, his accompaniment is a variety of sounds and techniques to be discussed presently, which are instead composed in minor.<sup>55</sup> This then gives the audience a bit of trepidation about the character, but his accompaniment and mode suggests he is not a “good” character.

Pontius Pilate also is supported by some unexpected and ironic music during the show, conveying the feeling of distrust. When Jesus first meets with Pilate, the high winds, strings (including a non-synthesized harp), and mallet percussion play descending *glissandi* that are distinctly in minor. As he acknowledges Jesus and subsequently mocks him, the rock strings and orchestral strings play an oom-pah pattern (rock on the “oom,” traditional on the “pah”). This is replaced as Pilate grows more agitated with the captive’s resistance with high and low electric

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<sup>54</sup> OR, CD 2, Track 8.

<sup>55</sup> OR, CD 2, Track 5.

strings.<sup>56</sup> The shift in instrumentation here implies the change in mood, and a departure from the earlier perception of the character.

Herod, meanwhile, sings a combination of a campy lounge number and soft-shoe in “King Herod’s Song,” at first heard only with piano. During the first verse, the bass and tuba play on beats one and three while the electric guitars supply countermelodies to the vocals, all playing within a major mode.<sup>57</sup> The bass and tuba continue through the dance break, while the piano and guitar riff on the melody. When Herod becomes less than amused, brass and winds enter, playing along with the vocal lines. Though his lyrics taunt Jesus and by his number’s end he has dismissed him, the light-hearted nature of his song makes him no less of a threat in the overall narrative.

Herod is also the only character to have noticeable tuba accompaniment on a walking bass line. Though the music is largely a showcase for the pianist that at several moments has variations on the melody and also plays runs and *glissandi*, a larger sampling of the pit orchestra, in particular the high brasses, sounds during the last iteration of the melody. Since Herod is an antagonist, and also the one who sends Jesus back to Pilate for sentencing, the audience might expect him to be accompanied in a minor mode with low, ominous, threatening instruments. Instead he is accompanied primarily by higher, lighter, music in a major mode and voices, even after he becomes angry with Jesus’s continued lack of fear. This can serve to inform the audience in two different ways. First, that although a considerable foe, he is not nearly as serious a threat as Caiaphas and Pilate, who want to find a “permanent solution” to Jesus. Second, it suggests that, while other characters’ changes in mood and mind require a huge change in style or instrumentation to help reinforce how big a difference these things are, Herod’s song hardly varies,

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<sup>56</sup> OR, CD 2, Track 5, 0:33.

<sup>57</sup> OR, CD 2, Track 6, 0:30.

suggesting he is not to be taken as seriously as he is portrayed as a mostly surface, vain, and comic character.

The last time the audience sees Pilate, he is about to sentence Jesus. The first piece of accompaniment is the low strings and piano once more, as with Caiaphas, who makes his momentary vocal appearance to suggest crucifixion, as well as underscoring that features the guitar riff with bent notes heard in the overture. This recurrence allows the audience to understand that Pilate is coming around to Caiaphas's way of thinking: that Jesus needs to disappear. Thus, while Caiaphas remains musically antagonistic throughout and Herod appears in a momentary allusion to earlier musical theater, Pilate makes a definite progression from potential protagonist to antagonist through the aid of his accompaniment.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, Lloyd Webber's orchestration treats various characters according to their moods, roles, and personalities. Jesus is accompanied by traditional instruments during his calmer moments and rock during his agitated states, while Judas sings with rhythmic, lower, darker rock instruments to portray him as dark and brooding, save his moment of realization. Mary Magdalene, a protagonist and female, is characterized with high, light sounds and more melodic vocal lines rather than the motivic lines found in many other voices. Her music is a departure from other characters due to her status as the only prominent female character. The disciples and citizens are accompanied by both traditional and rock instruments, depending on the mood of the scene. The antagonists are all depicted different musically, with Pilate the most varied, changing between instrumentation and styles depending on his mood, Caiaphas low and threatening, and Herod playful, yet goading. The distinctive styles and groupings of instruments allow the audience to

distinguish the type of character and the intent of an action or scene within the framework of the show as a whole.

The marriage of two different ensembles with different associations served to place *Superstar* in a special place in the history of musical theater. Because rock instruments had been played successfully in conjunction with a reverent and historical theme, subsequent shows set in different eras could also employ this treatment. In addition, the fact that the two groups not only played in opposition, but also at varying points played together was significant in that it created a composite pit sound that continues to be present on Broadway today.



## **Chapter 5: Grease**

“The old music, with its Buddy Holly hiccups, its Little Richard yodels, its yackety-yacks and sha-na-nas, has been reissued, repackaged and re-enlisted in the drive of a titanic self-conscious generation to get a firm grip on its identity. All this has the great American mixture of melancholy and fun, a mixture caught engagingly by *Grease*.” –Jack Kroll<sup>1</sup>

Rock music was not always included in a musical's score with the intention of shifting paradigms or making parallels to popular songs on the radio at the time of a show's initial staging. *Grease*, by Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey, provided a different musical perspective for the audience than other shows studied in this project, and drew on a method earlier introduced in *Bye Bye Birdie*, with its score by Lee Adams and Charles Strouse. Jacobs and Casey, rather than setting the show in their present (the early 1970s), the far distant past (*Jesus Christ Superstar* or *Pippin*), or in a fantastical setting (as will be seen in *The Wiz*), *Grease* paid homage to the audience's then-recent past, looking back just two decades and to styles associated with that period. Additionally, the plot draws elements from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, albeit set within 1950s culture and high school.

Focusing on social structure and cliquish expectations keeping the lovers apart, rather than traditional family feuding, the story concerns the romance between a “good” girl and a “bad” greaser boy. Secondary storylines highlight their friends and their respective experiences, including a possible teenage pregnancy, peer pressure, and gang rumbles. Michael Leonard as the orchestrator employed a pit that was primarily a rock ensemble to evoke the popular musical flavor

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<sup>1</sup> Jack Kroll, “Before *Hair*,” *Newsweek*, February 28, 1972.

of the plot's decade, with additional winds and strings for certain numbers, including "It's Raining on Prom Night" and the reprise of "Look at Me, I'm Sandra Dee."

*Grease* represents another departure in this study as the only production to fall completely into Warfield's fourth category.<sup>2</sup> While similar to *Hair* in its primary reliance on a rock ensemble to supply the music, the stylistic palette is much more limited. However, individual numbers do reflect characteristics of particular artists, specific songs, and subgenres. In order to discuss how this manifests in the show, the musical treatment of male and female characters will be discussed, as well as piano, guitar, and vocal approaches that offer parallels to known period works.

*Hair* was frank in its treatment of sex, drugs, and war. *Promises, Promises* tackled infidelity and depression. *Company* examined isolation and adult relationships. *Jesus Christ Superstar* depicted scenes from the Bible with an emphasis on social and political issues. Thus, while the preceding studies might have considered moments of levity within these shows, a large portion of the subject matter was perceived as serious. In contrast, *Grease* portrays a light-hearted take on a school year and relationships. As such, the supporting music did not need to be particularly complex. The point was to remind the audiences of 1972 of their high school experience, replete with appropriate tunes.

### **The Creative Team**

Jim Jacobs (b. 1942) was born in Chicago and identified as a greaser while in high school, playing guitar and singing with local groups. He further developed his musical skills by sitting in with blues artists around the city, including Blind Arvella Grey and Daddy Stovepipe. Though his

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<sup>2</sup> Warfield's fourth category of rock musical refers to productions that reflect the popular music of a given era with the intention of evoking nostalgia. Please see Introduction, pages 20-21.

primary employment came from writing, he began to appear in a number of local theatrical productions, fulfilling his love of music and the stage.<sup>3</sup> His work as both a writer and actor continued in stage works, films, and commercials.

Warren Casey (1935-1988), originally from New York and who moved to Chicago as a young man, similarly developed as both an actor and songwriter. Formerly an art major at Syracuse, he became interested in acting once he moved to Chicago.<sup>4</sup> Working with several performing groups, including the Stage Guild, the Old Town Players, and the Kingston Mines Theatre, Casey too gained experience as both a performer and composer.

Jacobs and Casey first met while they were both working in Chicago. Each participated in several productions and worked professionally as actors, and, for Jacobs, also as a copywriter. They collaborated on an idea for a nostalgic '50s plot, inspired in part by Jacobs' own high school experiences, and first staged their show as a non-musical play while they were working in other capacities. Producers who attended the show's premiere recognized potential, but thought the element that was still very much needed was music to reinforce the show's time and atmosphere. First premiering with the Kingston Mines, the musicalized show then transferred to New York.<sup>5</sup>

Michael Leonard (1931-2015) studied at both Juilliard (earning a master's degree in composition) and the Handel Conservatory in Munich. He had a love for jazz and blues and learned to arrange from Sy Oliver. After working for a music publisher, he began to be employed as a conductor for a number of artists, including Tommy Sands (leading to a friendship with Nancy

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<sup>3</sup> Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archive, original program biography, file of materials related to *Grease*.

<sup>4</sup> Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archive, fact sheet, file of materials related to *Grease*.

<sup>5</sup> Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archive, original program biography, file of materials related to *Grease*.

Sinatra, to whom Sands was married briefly), and Dick Haymes. Leonard subsequently worked as an arranger for several artists, including Bill Evans.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to orchestrating *Grease*, Leonard arranged music for the production *A Desert Incident* (1959), and served as the composer for the shows *The Yearling* and *How To Be a Jewish Mother*.<sup>7</sup> As a musical director, he had several credits, including an Off-Broadway production called *Kumquats*, billed as an erotic puppet show.<sup>8</sup> He also worked occasionally in film and television, composing and orchestrating for the movie *The Billion Dollar Hobo* (1977), and several episodes of TV's *Happy Days*. Leonard was also an award-winning composer, winning a prize in 1961 from the Woodwind Society in Britain, and first prize in 1965 at the International Song Festival for "I'm All Smiles."<sup>9</sup>

### **Plot and Musical Backdrop**

Drawing on the audience's sense of nostalgia allowed the creative team to skirt socio-political issues that were directly addressed in other productions. Complications from war, race relations, and politics examined in other musicals were traded for high school romance, teenage social problems, and the idea of fear of life after graduation, with which many audience members could easily empathize. With a plot mired in recognizable tropes and character archetypes, the music for the show as a whole is similarly less thought-provoking, following standard 1950s harmonic structures, the use of *ostinati*, and infrequently pitting members of the orchestra against

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<sup>6</sup> Will Friedwald, "Smiling With Song: Re-Appreciating a New York Original," *The Wall Street Journal*, 25 January 2011.

<sup>7</sup> "Michael Leonard," *The Internet Broadway Database*, <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-cast-staff/michael-leonard-12046>, accessed October 12, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archive, original program biography, file of materials related to *Grease*.

<sup>9</sup> Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archive, original program biography, file of materials related to *Grease*.

one another to create a composite sound, as heard in other productions. The temporal setting allowed not only those who specifically remembered the time to absorb the music, but introduced 1950s rock to a younger generation of audience members.

*Grease* depicts senior year at Rydell High in New Jersey and the romances between several teenagers who fall into the categories of “greasers” and “squares.”<sup>10</sup> The greasers in the original production wore jeans and leather jackets, and their hair was slicked back with the titular grease, promoting the idea that they were the characters perceived as a source of potential trouble. The squares, meanwhile, were portrayed as more wholesome, with the girls wearing poodle skirts and sweaters and the boys wearing lettermen jackets. This further allowed for the costuming to help tell the story, because divisions between musical styles are not quite as defined. Many songs in the show directly reflect popular songs of the 1950s, and there are also numerous references to media such as radio and record players, as they would have been the primary sources of recorded sound during that period.<sup>11</sup>

While the plot is mainly a love story between two characters who should not be a pair, according to the rules of high school society and hierarchy, the secondary stories serve as support and provide alternate sources of conflict and perspective. Like the *Romeo and Juliet* tale, feuding does occur between characters, across gang lines, and, while no one is killed, this provides obstacles for the lovers. As their respective “families,” represented by the collective male and female characters, are seemingly unable to capitalize on their own potential, this too impacts the development of a central relationship.

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<sup>10</sup> Rydell high is so named after actor/singer Bobby Rydell.

<sup>11</sup> In the 1994 revival of the musical, the Skyliner’s 1959 song “Since I Don’t Have You” was interpolated to directly utilize a song from the time.

*Grease* begins at a high school reunion, perhaps ten or twenty years after the primary action, though this is not specified. The cast sings the school's Alma Mater, before the action reverts to the 1950s. There, Sandy Dumbrowski and Danny Zuko—having met over summer vacation, and after enjoying a romance—learn that they will be attending Rydell together for the school year after Sandy transfers from a Catholic girl's school. They individually tell their peers about their relationship in “Summer Nights,” offering two different sequences of events, with Sandy's likely closer to the truth and Danny's heavily embellished with suggestive lyrics. This introduces not only their backstory, but also how they act to relate to their peers. Sandy is naturally pure and naïve, and Danny has a reputation to uphold and a developed persona that Sandy did not encounter during their summer together.

Initially elated to see Sandy again, Danny becomes suddenly distant from her because of the reaction of his friends, the Burger Palace Boys (Roger, a.k.a. “Rump,” Sonny, Doody, and Kenicke) and the Pink Ladies (Rizzo, Frenchy, Jan, and Marty), several of whom had begun to befriend Sandy.<sup>12</sup> They are clearly surprised that Sandy, a wholesome young woman, would have been Danny's summer romance, especially after he implies they had a relationship of a more sexual nature.

Sandy begins to integrate into the school's social system, making friends with cheerleader, Patty Simcox, and several of Danny's female friends, save for Betty Rizzo, who openly mocks her in the number “Look at Me, I'm Sandra Dee,” comparing her to the family-friendly movie star of the same name. Sandy and Danny do reconcile briefly, only to fight again over their different hopes for their relationship, leaving Danny stranded in his car to sing “Alone at a Drive-In Movie” at the

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<sup>12</sup> In the 1978 film, the 2007 revival, and the 2016 television special, the Burger Palace Boys are renamed “The T-Birds.”

conclusion of their date. In the end, Sandy decides to change her image to better mold herself to Danny's expectations, and they finish the production as a couple in "All Choked Up."<sup>13</sup> The entire company then voices their desire to remain friends forever and the show culminates in the song, "We Go Together." This proves somewhat ironic because the audience knows that the Burger Palace Boys and Pink Ladies were not present at the reunion portrayed at the onset of the show.

While Sandy and Danny experience continuous longing for and annoyance with one another, their friends encounter their own individual problems. Rizzo suspects she may be pregnant by an unacknowledged father, which could only add to her already troubled image, outlined in "There Are Worse Things I Could Do." Frenchy drops out of high school to attend beauty school, only to flunk out there as well. She later gains advice on considering her future from a Teen Angel figure in "Beauty School Dropout." Marty is engaged in a relationship with a serviceman, whom she sees as a means of obtaining presents, explained in "Freddie, My Love." The secondary male characters learn of a potential rumble with a gang from another school in which they feel obliged to be involved.<sup>14</sup>

While rife with conflict, the plot also features many lighter moments. One of the Burger Palace Boys, Roger, has a reputation as the "Mooning Champ of Rydell High" and sings a song that doubles as both a description of his skill and a declaration of his desire for Jan, a member of the Pink Ladies, over whom he "moons." The boys, discovering their friend Kenicke has a car (though one in need of a lot of work), sing a number about its potential for garnering female attention in "Greased Lightnin'." Though both numbers are similarly comical in nature, they also add to the characterization of greasers as overtly sexual beings. The cast of characters also

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<sup>13</sup> In more recent productions, this number is replaced by "You're the One that I Want," as performed in the film.

<sup>14</sup> In the 1978 film, the rumble storyline is adapted into a drag race with the rival gang.

collectively attend a school dance, where they set about outdoing each other and partaking in a popular dance craze of the time, the “Hand Jive,” alongside energetic radio disc jockey Vince Fontaine.

While elements of the plot are indeed serious, many audience members and critics viewed the musical as making fun of movies and performers of the 1950s, citing such elements as the appearance of a teen angel to advise Frenchy and Sandy’s sunny naiveté. Parallels can be drawn to characters such as Gidget (coincidentally played by Sandra Dee in the first film of the series) and the perennially optimistic worldview of characters like the Cleavers from *Leave It to Beaver* (1957).

### **The Score: The Reunion**

While *Grease* is less experimental with its orchestration than others in the study, the variety of characters, and the situations in which they find themselves still necessitates some means of musical differentiation. The way in which this is achieved in *Grease* is through varying the styles of music used for each character rather than the orchestration directly. This method is worthy of study, as subsequent Broadway productions that rely solely on rock music to carry the action and must find some way to achieve variety, use some of the same tactics.<sup>15</sup> While rock instrumentation is present in each number, how big a role each individual instrument plays depends on the needs of the evoked style. Ranging from songs with tight harmonies in the vein of the Crew Cuts to ballads potentially inspired by artists like Peggy Lee to optimistic songs that suggest singers like Doris Day, the show exhibits an array of approaches.

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<sup>15</sup> This is particularly true of jukebox musicals, including *American Idiot* (2010) and *Rock of Ages* (2009).



The pit requirements for this production include electric guitars and bass, piano, saxophones, and percussion (primarily drum set), with occasional appearances of orchestral violins, notably in “It’s Raining on Prom Night” and the reprise of “Look at Me, I’m Sandra Dee.”<sup>16</sup> Whereas the rock ensemble was used in a way to demonstrate the rebelliousness of the hippies in *Hair* and served to highlight aspects of the plot and characters in *Superstar*, in *Grease* the ensemble functions mainly as accompaniment. How the individual instruments are used makes direct parallels, or at times even includes quotations of popular tunes, informing the characters in that way.

The only song that does not suggest rock ‘n’ roll, save for its immediate reprise, is the school’s “Alma Mater” that opens the show, which sounds with piano only, and places the action forward in time at a school reunion, where the characters are older, as the 1972 audience members who attended high school in the 1950s would be. Though setting itself apart musically from the other numbers in this way, the intention was to create the atmosphere of singing in a school auditorium or gym with a teacher plunking out the accompaniment to the school song on a piano with an opening flourish to move the students to stand attentively. On the reprise of the Alma Mater, when the characters revert back to their high school selves—the forms in which audiences see them for the remainder of the show—and the main characters enter the stage, the guitars and drums take over the accompaniment, a soundscape more appropriate for a youthful group of the 1950s. This interlude likewise serves to preview the music to be heard throughout the remainder of the show.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> This description of orchestration is valid for the original 1972 production; however, revivals have made major changes to the instrumentation for a variety of reasons, including to mimic the sound of the 1978 film.

<sup>17</sup> In the 1994 revival, the alma mater as it appeared in the original production was replaced by a chorale setting of “We Go Together,” reprised briefly during the finale.

Not only does the style and character of the music change, but the lyrics do as well. When singing as returning adults, the cast sings reverent lyrics about the school and its impact on their lives. The principal, Ms. McGee, steps forward to address the alumni, remarking on their accomplishments and how proud she is of them. However, the moment she alludes to those alumni missing from the reunion (whereupon the audience is taken back in time), the music drastically changes. When that occurs, the lyrics to the school's song are parodied. In place of "As I go traveling down life's highway," for example, the characters sing, "I saw a dead skunk on the highway."<sup>18</sup> This is coupled with a strong backbeat and stingers by the saxophones and guitars, signaling the musical sound of the decade, along with the rebellious attitude expected of those who participate in rock music. The change from lyrics to the reverent words of the first version of the Alma Mater also serve to indicate to the audience the somewhat rebellious nature of the main characters. They have no qualms about mocking their school and their peers and they have the potential to be vulgar, though no words suggest that they are in any way harmful.

### **The Score: Group Numbers**

The opening full scene of *Grease* concerns the first day of the Rydell school year. Sandy is the new student and meets the Pink Ladies and cheerleader Patty Simcox. While trying to connect with Sandy, the girls ask her about her summer, and she admits she met a boy. Simultaneously, the male characters meet up with Danny and posit the same question. He likewise admits he met a girl. The resulting number in the show, "Summer Nights," details two sides of the same story, using the same musical material for both characters, but with alterations in the lyrics and accompanying instrumentation.

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<sup>18</sup> Stanley Richards, ed., *Great Rock Musicals* (New York: Stein and Say Publishers, 1979), 178-79.

One compositional element that is common in several popular styles, including rock, and present in many numbers in this show, is that of a groove and buildup. These terms refer to specific repeating patterns (grooves) in several instrumental parts that are gradually layered on top of one another (creating a buildup).<sup>19</sup> This occurs at the beginning of several numbers in *Grease*, including “Summer Nights,” “Those Magic Changes,” sung by Doody, and “The Hand Jive,” and the opening melodies then continue throughout the songs. While this technique appears in several of the shows in this study (*Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Pippin*), in *Grease*, rather than alluding to popular styles for a particular characterization purpose, instead serves to almost quote specific popular tunes, such as the opening to “Rock Around the Clock” (1955), further cementing the show’s temporal locale.

As “Summer Nights” begins, the electric bass plays a syncopated *ostinato* heard throughout the duration of the number, evoking an association to a song such as “My Girl” (1964), which opens in the same fashion with the same instrument. The characters in *Grease* initially speak over the groove, allowing it to be heard several times while Sandy and Danny’s begin their tales. As Danny starts to sing, shakers, drum set, and electric guitar join the accompaniment.<sup>20</sup> While the characters tell their respective sides of the story, the built-up groove remains in place until the chorus enters. The groove sounds throughout the song, but migrates between instruments, from bass to guitar and keyboards, occasionally shared between groups of instruments.

The voices of the chorus replace much of the instrumental music in the refrain sections of the song, with both legitimate phrases of words (“Tell me more”) and syllabic patterns (“Shoo-da-

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<sup>19</sup> Robin Attas, “Meter as Process in Groove-Based Popular Music,” (Ph.D. diss., University of British Columbia, 2011), 2 and 198.

<sup>20</sup> See Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey, *Grease*, Polydor: 827 548-2, 1987. CD. Hereafter abbreviated to “OR” for “Original Recording,” Track 2, 0:23.

lop-bop”) reminiscent of the era.<sup>21</sup> In those moments, the backing instruments continue to play, but are less the focus than the words. The use of the chorus as an additional “instrument” of the pit was not a completely new idea, previously heard in *Promises, Promises* (1968), but because the additional characters are also reacting to the story rather than functioning as mere backup, their role is to help propel the action and narrative forward.

In a change of mood during the number, the two lovers acknowledge that their summer romance had to come to an end. At this point in the song, the tempo decreases and only the opening bass *ostinato* remains. When the two characters pause in reflection, and simply sing “oh,” the keyboard plays a rolled chord, in the vein of a short reminiscence pattern.<sup>22</sup> In one of the few moments with prominent percussion in the song, Sandy and Danny come together to sing the words, “those summer nights.” When the word “nights” is sung for the final time, the chorus re-enters, punctuating that moment as a climax.<sup>23</sup>

In “Hand Jive,” the characters attend a school dance while dealing with a number of situational emotions, spanning from infatuation (Marty and Vince Fontaine) to love (Roger and Jan) to anger (Rizzo and Kenicke) to annoyance (Danny and Sandy). This scene serves in part as a catalyst for the show’s resolution as the individual characters’ storylines come to a head. The dance promotes a contest involving the Hand Jive, and as each couple makes a mistake with the choreography, they are eliminated.<sup>24</sup> Like in “Summer Nights,” the opening *ostinato*, played on the guitar first, sounds throughout the majority of the song, and once the groove is established,

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<sup>21</sup> Songs with nonsensical syllabic patterns such as those found in “Summer Nights” were popular during the late fifties and early sixties, seen in songs like “Sh’boom” (1956) by the Crew-Cuts, “Who put the bomp?” (1961) by Barry Mann, and “Witch Doctor” (1958) by Ross Bagdasarian Sr. Clips of the second two songs can be found in the finale of the 1978 film version of *Grease* just prior to the end credits.

<sup>22</sup> OR, Track 2, 3:16.

<sup>23</sup> OR, Track 2, 3:28.

<sup>24</sup> The Hand Jive is depicted as a well-known dance craze, not unlike The Twist.

further instruments are added for the buildup, including percussion and electric bass, before the voice finally enters.<sup>25</sup> Vince Fontaine, the deejay for the contest, is symbolic of popular radio personalities; the dialogue assigned to Fontaine reflects several radio hosts of the time such as disc jockey Alan Freed, known for hosting dance events.

Much like the parody lyrics for the Alma Mater, the words for “Hand Jive” are meant to be funny, remarking on the dancing abilities of the song’s narrator at birth. However, the focus of the song for the audience is truly not on the words, but rather on the dance competition and the trading off between partners and couples. As such, the song has several dance breaks. Because “Hand Jive” is meant to reflect popular 1950s dance songs, the accompaniment is completely provided by the rock ensemble.<sup>26</sup> It is also a static number; aside from the short dance breaks, the music is repetitious, with all instruments of the rock ensemble playing *ostinati*.

The accompanying instruments rarely follow the lead vocalists on any given number, though they mirror what the chorus members are singing (or vice-versa) in such numbers as “Summer Nights,” “Those Magic Changes,” and “Mooning,” to name a few. By this, the chorus members perform vocal *ostinati* that accompany the lead singer(s), and often the members of the pit play the same patterns in their respective ranges. Several rock songs use this technique, providing rhythmic and harmonic structure for the leads. At times vocals and instruments move together during these songs and at other times there is no relationship between them.

“We Go Together” marks the ends of both acts of the show, an ensemble number wherein the company promises to always be friends. In the same vein as the other group numbers, this too begins with a groove, in this case provided by the bass and tenor saxophone the first time it is

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<sup>25</sup> OR, Track 10, 0:52.

<sup>26</sup> This is not the case in the 1978 film, as one dance breaks features a soaring line from the violins.

heard and thereafter incorporating the drum set; this continues throughout the majority of the song.<sup>27</sup> The groove is only broken during the bridge of the song, and at that point, the instruments instead play short tags at the ends of the vocal lines, punctuating what was just being said.<sup>28</sup> Because the music is again quite repetitious, emphasis is on both the lyrics and the fact that the company is singing in unison, something that is relatively uncommon in *Grease*; outside of the alma mater and “We Go Together,” other numbers feature a soloist and backup singers or smaller combinations of characters singing together.

The notion of solo singers supported by backup vocalists greatly reflected the popular music of the 1950s. The chorus as a unit in *Grease*, serving as an additional component of the orchestration, is flexible, fitting within the style demanded by a given number. Overall, when the chorus is performing, the entire gamut of the pit instruments is also playing, more so out of necessity to be heard and create a full sound.

### **The Score: The Girls**

The specific approaches to orchestrating for numbers also reflect the trajectory of the characters in question, and this is particularly evident with the prominent female characters in the show. Sandy Dumbrowski, the nice, polite girl, spends most of the production struggling to fit in with the greaser crowd. Her accompanying instrumentation, often played homophonically, supports this portrayal. The ranges are high, and the featured instruments are violins, electric guitar, and synthesizer, with little percussion, save for her participation in larger group numbers. This treatment is not unlike that of women in contemporary productions, such as Crissy in *Hair* and Mary Magdalene in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, rendering it an ongoing musical method of

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<sup>27</sup> OR, Track 8.

<sup>28</sup> See OR, Track 8, 0:56, at the end of “or at the high school dance, where you can find romance.”

depicting women on stage. When Sandy does finally alter her image to be absorbed into the greaser group, she is accompanied by several electric guitars in varying ranges and percussion in the song “All Choked Up,” mirroring the musical treatment given to Danny, with whom she is now fully partnered.

Other women of the show are similarly given individual music styles. Though Sandy, as the least static character, undergoes a change in her music, eventually adapting to music more aligned with the Pink Ladies earlier in the show, and Rizzo’s trajectory is in complete opposition, the other girls are less flexible.<sup>29</sup> However, it is not necessary to take them on the same type of musical journey as Sandy and Rizzo, who learn to change in their respective ways, and the change must be marked in their corresponding sounds

Sandy’s transformation into a Pink Lady arrives with a distinct change in musical style that aligns more so with Danny’s. Near the end, the new Sandy is presented to her classmates in the song “All Choked Up,” during which she sings the same melodic content as her male counterpart. While this was also true during “Summer Nights,” the lyric content and the subtle shifts in instrumentation in that number helped to suggest that Sandy was more innocent. In this later number, both characters sing lyrics with occasional double entendre, and the instrumentation behind the two is the same.

Otherwise, Sandy’s music is also the most orchestral of all the characters, notable in the numbers “It’s Raining on Prom Night” and the reprise of “Look at Me, I’m Sandra Dee.” The drastic timbral change from the music of her peers in a way serves to isolate Sandy. Both songs

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<sup>29</sup> In the 1994 revival of the show, Sandy sings “Since I Don’t Have You” by the Skyliners, and in the 2007 revival, she sings “Hopelessly Devoted to You,” which originally appeared in the film. Both songs are rock ballads and focus heavily on the vocals, with the pit musicians playing *ostinati* except for the introductions and conclusions.

offer the same general mood. In the former, Sandy laments the weather on the night of the formal, as it has ruined her hair, makeup, and clothing, and has caused her to become sick. Despite this, her concern is still love, and instead of singing during the middle of the song, she instead speaks a missive to Danny.

Spoken word interludes in songs were common in songs of the late 1950s and early 1960s, particularly coming out of rhythm and blues tradition. Either functioning as a prelude to the song, or as a vocal break in the middle of the song, the words offer additional commentary with a different type of inflection for the listener. The Contours' 1962 hit "Do You Love Me?" illustrates the former, segueing into the song, much like Danny's spoken words that lead directly into "Greased Lightnin'," while the latter concept finds an echo in the Elvis hit "Are You Lonesome Tonight?" (1960). These moments, while parodying popular conventions, are also meant to be funny. Sandy addresses Danny as though their star-crossed love has been forever thwarted in "Raining on Prom Night," and in "Greased Lightnin'," Danny makes a sales pitch for a car that makes its entrance with little promise of being more than a "hunk of junk."

Betty Rizzo, as the "bad girl" of the Pink Ladies, has a much darker and brassier approach to her music. She is openly disdainful of Sandy and other female members of the student body who are more conservative, and even sings a song mocking Sandy. Rizzo's accompaniment heavily features saxophone, an instrument often associated with sexuality.<sup>30</sup> Rizzo's characterization depicts her as somewhat wanton, and it is she who ends up having a pregnancy scare, though this ultimately proves to be a false alarm.

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<sup>30</sup> Michael Segell, *The Devil's Horn: The Story of the Saxophone, from Noisy Novelty to King of Cool* (London: Macmillan, 2006), 35.



During her final solo number, “There Are Worse Things I Could Do,” Rizzo explains to Sandy that her reputation is merely a perception. In this song, the accompanying music opens with synthesizer playing rolled chords between lines of lyrics, such as “There are worse things I could do than go with a boy or two.”<sup>31</sup> When she alludes to her perceived reputation and suggests that she could “flirt with all the guys,” the saxophone enters, reinforcing the sexual nature of her image.<sup>32</sup>

When Rizzo finally admits that her behavior could “hurt someone like me,” the accompaniment becomes tamer, retaining the saxophone to play a countermelody, but relying primarily on the guitars and keyboards, the lighter, more naively feminine accompaniment previously associated with Sandy. This perhaps illustrates that Rizzo’s persona is an act.

Marty is similarly shown to be somewhat sexualized in the number “Freddie, My Love.”<sup>33</sup> The song details her letter-writing to a marine, Freddie, with whom she has no interaction, but who sends her gifts, including souvenirs and jackets. Her accompaniment similarly features the saxophone, reinforcing the sexual nature of her song. The vocal line for her song also calls for the inclusion of “hiccup” on certain words or phrases, including the name “Freddie,” in the style of Buddy Holly and Elvis Presley (in the former’s “Peggy Sue,” for example), integral musical figures of the 1950s.

The hiccup is a vocal technique that surfaces in several numbers sung by different characters. This occurs when a singer breaks a word or syllable into smaller unit with short intakes of breath in between. The use of a technique so aligned with popular artists further enhanced the

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<sup>31</sup> OR, Track 14, 0:00.

<sup>32</sup> OR, Track 14, 0:44.

<sup>33</sup> A play on The Chordettes’ “Eddy My Love.”

parodic nature of the show.<sup>34</sup> In *Grease*, this is also noticeable when Danny is abandoned by Sandy at the drive-in movie and sings a blues-inspired ballad, “Alone at a Drive-In Movie.” Words such as “movie” and “groovy” include hiccups, and during those moments there is no accompaniment. This is perhaps partially intended to make sure the audience hears those breaks with no cover.

Frenchy and Jan do not participate in solo numbers, but are rather secondary to the other characters.<sup>35</sup> Frenchy is the subject of “Beauty School Dropout,” but does not sing; rather, the Teen Angel who sings delivers a series of messages and warnings to her. Frenchy does, though, sing backup in group numbers. Jan is the subject of “Mooning,” and responds to several of Rump’s lines during the verses, but the number does not feature her enough to truly consider it a duet.

Patty Simcox, Rydell’s head cheerleader, does not sing much over the course of *Grease* beyond group numbers. She does, however, in some renditions of the show, share a moment with Sandy that is the school’s fight song.<sup>36</sup> The orchestration in this number, while still including rock instrumentation, is meant to evoke the sound of a marching band or group that would play in the stands during a sporting event, featuring trumpets, winds, and snare drums.

### **The Score: Male Characters**

The male characters of *Grease* are less developed and more static than their female counterparts. Danny Zuko, who spends the better part of the show trying to win Sandy, finishes with having learned nothing and not having changed or grown. He remains a greaser while Sandy changes her image to better suit herself to him. The Burger Palace Boys similarly do not change,

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<sup>34</sup> Other shows that are set in the 1960s, including *Hairspray* (2003), utilize this technique, as seen in a number such as “Mama I’m a Big Girl Now”

<sup>35</sup> In the 2016 television special, a new number was written for Frenchy, as portrayed by Carly Rae Jepsen.

<sup>36</sup> This is most noticeable in the 1994 revival, sung by Susan Wood and Michelle Blakely. In the 2016 special, this was replaced with a cheerleading tryout backed by marching band.

and Eugene, the nerd character, finishes the show as he started. Despite a lack of character arcs, these figures cover an array of styles.

Aside from the previously studied “Summer Nights” and “Greased Lightnin’,” Danny participates in several more numbers as a soloist or featured performer, including “All Choked Up” and “We Go Together.” His biggest featured moment, however, comes in the second act of the show. A scene at the drive-in movie theater finds Danny left by himself after Sandy feels he has exhibited inappropriate behavior. To detail his misery, he sings a song entitled, “Alone at a Drive-In Movie.”<sup>37</sup> A comical rock ballad, Danny sings about his fogged windows, the speakers, and going to the concessions stand during intermission. In a slow four, with percussion and saxophone as accompaniment, the song is reminiscent of such ballad numbers as “Tears on my Pillow” by Little Anthony and the Imperials.<sup>38</sup>

Rock crooners are also given their due during the show in the guise of a Teen Angel who advises Frenchy to return to Rydell after flunking out of beauty school. His appearance in “Beauty School Dropout” portrays him with a bevy of backup singers, singing in a moderate, swinging tempo. While crooners tended to sing about more innocent subject matter, the angel in the musical urges Frenchy to make the right choices for her life. In subsequent revivals, the Teen Angel is reimagined as a rock screecher, similar to Little Richard, with gospel backup.<sup>39</sup> While the original incarnation of the character makes more subtle suggestions, the revival angel is much more aggressive in addressing Frenchy.

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<sup>37</sup> In the 1978 film, 2009 revival, and 2016 Fox Special, this number is replaced by the song “Sandy.”

<sup>38</sup> The song does not feature the saxophone as the show’s number does, but the percussive pattern, song format, and subject matter of abandonment ring true. “Tears on my Pillow” is also featured in the film as one of the songs playing during the school dance.

<sup>39</sup> The 1994 revival featured Billy Porter in the role of the teen angel; Porter had a developed career as a gospel singer and shouter before he was cast.

Like other shows considered in this study, the main male roles are treated as musically stylistic individuals. Danny Zuko, as a greaser, but also the man who broke Sandy's heart, straddles more up-tempo rock songs and ballads to show his character's range. Kenicke, the leader of the greaser gang, primarily takes a backseat to other characters, save for the song, "Greased Lightnin'," a fast-paced rock description of fast cars and fast women.

In "Those Magic Changes," the audience is introduced to Doody, one of the Burger Palace Boys, who has recently taken up the guitar. His friends seize the opportunity to mock him, asking what he can play. He states the title of the song and begins to play his guitar, outlining — and naming — the chords that structure the entire number (C-A-Am-F-G7). The opening pattern that progresses through the key areas continually returns throughout the number under the lyrics.

"Mooning" is a rock ballad, complete with piano *ostinato* and saxophone countermelody. The serious nature of the music is undercut by the lyrics, however, full of *double entendre*, including the title itself. Subsequent lyrics refer to a "red eye," which could suggest the result of weeping over one's love, though it also colloquially refers to an irritation of one's behind, harkening back to the initial meaning of "mooning." Despite the ambiguous message of the song, the music is fairly straightforward. After Rump sings the first instance of "I spend my days" with considerable *rubato*, the rock ensemble enter, playing individual *ostinati*, like in other numbers of the show.

### **The Guitar and the Piano**

Whereas in other shows in this study a particular instrumental moment might inspire a parallel to a specific performer, the guitar and keyboard parts in *Grease*, which could allow for even more direct correlations to known artists, are much more generic. In the 1950s, prominent

players in rock groups were known for their skills on these instruments and they evoked associations with solo artists as well, such as Jerry Lee Lewis and Chuck Berry.

However, the method of their use in *Grease* instead comments on popular styles more broadly. The fact that these parts are more generic could have been somewhat intentional, as the decade of the 1950s is often viewed as less musically experimental and harder to determine individual styles. A few touchstones of note require some discussion. The use of slow piano introductions to “Freddie, My Love” and the reprise of “Look at Me, I’m Sandra Dee,” for example, though differing in that the former functions as a fanfare and the latter a simple, chordal introduction, are reminiscent of the openings to songs by female solo artists in the 1950s, such as “Dream a Little Dream of Me,” recorded by Doris Day. While no direct quotation exists, an association with the feminine does.

The guitar’s role throughout much of the show is as an accompanying instrument, never given the chance to play solo lines or riffs as in several of the other examined productions. But this removes parallels made to artists who accompany themselves and instead suggest singers or groups that have an ongoing backup band, like The Crew Cuts

## **Conclusion**

Since its premiere, *Grease* has earned a place as one of the longest-running musicals in Broadway history. Its initial run lasted for eight years and 3,388 performances, its 1994 revival yielded just under another four years and 1,505 performances, and its 2007 revival 554 performances. The show’s popularity, coupled with the film’s success and the fact that the plot is less riddled with profanity and strife than other shows, has made *Grease* a staple of high school spring musicals.

However, the musical approach to the show as discussed in this chapter is not applicable to the revivals. In part this is due to the ever-developing nature of theatrical productions, changing elements of the show to better employ new technology. For *Grease*, an explicit effort to capitalize on the film is the main reason. The song list has changed, and with it, the orchestrations.

The music of the original production was praised for its resemblance to songs of the 1950s and its high energy. In his June review of *Grease*, *New York Times* critic Harris Green pointed out the need for such a show because it was less taxing and more fun than many other productions of the time. He noted:

This season, rock has come to be considered so potent an esthetic form that it has been treated as if it were suitable for any subject, even for texts as demanding as Euripides or the New Testament. This is also the season when a social conscience became so fashionable on Broadway that matters such as slum clearance, drug addiction and criminal insanity were felt to be toe-tapping topics for song and dance.<sup>40</sup>

Detailing the show's return to a simpler, more carefree time, with only a few moments of topical heaviness, Green's review suggested that *Grease* could appeal to a wide audience because of its accessibility. He went on to say:

The musical, I think we need to be reminded, is not a sociological thesis with a sense of rhythm or an opera gone slumming — or the highest form of theater, for that matter. But the special diversion it offers is always welcome, if it's high-spirited and unpretentious. "Grease," for the most part, is.<sup>41</sup>

More recent reviews of later productions conceive of the show as a time capsule of sorts, acknowledging that the original show was intended as a parody or spoof, but that the almost

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<sup>40</sup> Harris Green, "Groovy: Groovin' with 'Grease,'" *The New York Times*, June 4, 1972.

<sup>41</sup> Green, "Groovy: Groovin' with 'Grease.'"

constant presence of the show has invited some to view it as a depiction of the era. In part this is thanks to the show's place in the public's eye through the film, multiple recordings, the reality show that allowed the public to aid in casting the 2007 revival, and the recent 2016 television special.

Though *Grease* was and is not as musically cutting-edge as many other productions, the music itself functions as preservation of rock characteristics of the 1950s. While this had been done on a slightly smaller scale with *Bye Bye Birdie* only twelve years earlier, the idea of paying homage to earlier rock styles rather than contemporary to help tell a story has had quite a lasting effect, seen in more recent years with a show like the 1960s-set *Hairspray* (2003).

## **Chapter 6: *Pippin***

“It is nevertheless consistently tuneful and contains a few rock ballads that could prove memorable.” –Clive Barnes on *Pippin*<sup>1</sup>

While several shows that premiered in the 1960s and 1970s that included rock music into their scores tended to affirm the modern locales and characters for the audience (as with *Hair* and *Company*), other shows featured plots that took place at a much earlier time or in a very different, exotic place. In these cases, the use of rock music was in part to make the show more accessible to the viewers, accounting for any temporal disconnect. *Pippin*, much like the earlier Stephen Schwartz production of *Godspell* (1971), or even Lloyd Webber’s *Jesus Christ Superstar*, was an example of that approach. It examined a particular moment in time or history, altering elements to enhance the plot and using contemporary music to make the subject matter more relatable.

In many ways, *Pippin* bears a direct relationship to *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Working with a version of an historical event, the music, rather than being period-accurate, incorporates rock music as well as several other eclectic styles to inform the audience about the characters and situations at hand. One major difference, however, is that *Pippin* includes a framing device to help tell the story, which differentiates it from most of the preceding productions detailed thus far, though links it to *Company* and *A Chorus Line*.<sup>2</sup>

In order to properly examine this musical, several points will be considered in detail. These include the role of the Leading Player, who functions as an ambiguous master of ceremonies during

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<sup>1</sup> Clive Barnes, “Theater: Musical ‘Pippin’ at Imperial: Hirson-Schwartz Show Is Directed by Fosse Ben Vereen Stands Out as the Narrator,” *The New York Times*, Oct. 24, 1972.

<sup>2</sup> Please see chapters 3 and 7 for examinations of *Company* and *A Chorus Line*, respectively.



the production, important because he is not aligned consistently with any one musical style and thus requires a flexible approach to orchestration. Pippin himself, as he develops and matures over the course of the production, will be subject to special attention because accompanying music helps describe his personal journey. Supporting characters, including Charlemagne, Fastrada, Berthe, and Catherine will each be discussed, as well as dance numbers and the use of a traveling troupe of performers as the frame for the show, all of which require orchestrational variance.

Like *Superstar* and *Company*, the instruments included in the score are plentiful, and include those from both the orchestral and rock groups. Falling into the second of Warfield's categories, the entirety of the music for *Pippin* does not suggest rock outright, but a large percentage invites comparisons to popular songs of the time.<sup>3</sup> For that reason, and because of the later influences of members of the creative team, this musical deserves an examination.

### **The Creative Team**

Composer Stephen Schwartz (b. 1948) began his musical career while a student in Juilliard's Preparatory Division, studying piano, theory, and composition.<sup>4</sup> He later enrolled at Carnegie Mellon University (then Carnegie Tech) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. A pupil in the School of Theater, he joined the student-run Scotch 'n' Soda society, becoming their songwriter for several productions. It was during his time there that he first worked with an orchestrator, learning about selecting instruments and mixing sounds.

In 1967, Schwartz, along with music major Ron Strauss, began to work on a stage version of the life of Pepin, or Pippin, the son of Emperor Charlemagne. The show, then titled *Pippin*,

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<sup>3</sup> Please see Introduction, pages 20-21.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Laird, *The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz: From Godspell to Wicked and Beyond* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 7.

*Pippin*, was well-received and garnered enough encouragement for it to be developed further; however, Strauss did not follow the project through its later phases. Though *Godspell* was Schwartz's first success after college, he continued to develop *Pippin* until he found necessary interest from a producer to pursue its staging for Broadway. While the original *Pippin*, *Pippin* included music that was vaguely medieval to place the action in its temporal context with some additional styles, including patter songs and contrapuntal lines, the next stage in its adaptation would be geared toward an even broader spectrum of music.<sup>5</sup>

Dancer and choreographer Bob Fosse was brought in as the director for *Pippin*. His vision for the show, which displaced the story into a meta-narrative and featured his signature stylized movements, clashed with Schwartz's initial conception. While the resulting show was successful for its approach, the relationship between the composer and the director was soured, and Schwartz's participation waned considerably. Schwartz, however, did continue to supply new songs for the production.

Orchestrator Ralph Burns's musical background came primarily from performing; he received his formal education at the New England Conservatory.<sup>6</sup> While studying at NEC, Burns began creating transcriptions of jazz scores, further developing his arranging skills.<sup>7</sup> He began his career as a jazz pianist and later arranged for various jazz ensembles, later joining Woody

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<sup>5</sup> Laird, *The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz*, 12-13. Additionally, an April 26<sup>th</sup> article in the Carnegie Tech (now Carnegie Mellon) *Tartan* remarks on the collaboration's success as well as the "thick, dark, and rich" quality of the music, which attempted historical accuracy rather than rely on more modern musical theater songs.

<sup>6</sup> Steven Suskin, *The Sound of Broadway Music: A Book of Orchestrators and Orchestrations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 33.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Keepnews, "Ralph Burns, 79, Arranger and Composer from Big Bands to Broadway," *The New York Times*, 28 November, 2001.

Herman's band in the 1940s, and his ability to work adeptly with a palette of instrumental colors was praised by the bandleader.<sup>8</sup>

Burns became notable as an orchestrator for excluding strings in most of his scoring, an approach he first used in Richard Rodgers's aptly titled *No Strings*. The show instead relied on multiple reed and brass players, with all the reed books requiring saxophone, resulting in music that recalled swing bands.<sup>9</sup> Though he gradually integrated strings into his orchestrational mix, much of his particular sound drew inspiration from contemporary sources and focused more on winds, brasses, and keyboards, and occasionally electric guitar and bass. This is somewhat evident in the score to *Pippin*, that, although a show that features stringed instruments, Burns requests a great deal of participation from winds and percussion as well.<sup>10</sup>

The pit personnel Burns required for *Pippin* includes reeds, trumpet, trombones, horn, a full complement of strings, organ, harpsichord, harp, guitar, banjo, electric guitar, and two percussionists.<sup>11</sup> Also worth noting is his inclusion of both rock and traditional instrumentation; the two groups accompany songs written in multiple popular and traditional styles. Schwartz, however, believed Burns's orchestrational treatment of the pop and rock styles to be "old-fashioned," sounding more like earlier shows, and thus made alterations to the music before the recording and for the revival.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Suskin, *The Sound of Broadway Music*, 33.

<sup>9</sup> Suskin, *The Sound of Broadway Music*, 35.

<sup>10</sup> Though Burns is the primary orchestrator of *Pippin*, according to Suskin, Jonathan Tunick completed some additional orchestrations, mostly with dance numbers. *The Sound of Broadway Music*, 512.

<sup>11</sup> Suskin, *The Sound of Broadway Music*, 513.

<sup>12</sup> Laird, *The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz*, 62.

## **The Story**

*Pippin* is loosely constructed from events in the life of Pepin, the son of Emperor Charlemagne, and his quest to find his purpose, as well as learning to be a leader. Portrayed in the stage show as a dreamer looking for his “Corner of the Sky,” Pippin learns the strategy of war and the method of ruling from his father, as he will someday become the ruler of the Holy Roman Empire and face proportionally demanding responsibilities. Though he does assume command temporarily in the middle of the show, Pippin is exiled by his stepmother, Fastrada, and stepbrother, Lewis, following Charlemagne’s death at Pippin’s hands. The sights he sees during battle alongside Charlemagne act as a catalyst for Pippin, who leaves and experiences a series of adventures during his travels, including power over the empire after assuming his father’s title, battle, sex, and failure. When Pippin realizes his rule would not be successful, he brings his seemingly unfazed father back from the dead, before continuing on his travels, later falling in love with Catherine, who has a son, Theo. He proceeds to live an ordinary life on a farm, dealing with everyday problems, and feels conflicted about his feelings on the matter, having previously lived a life with more opportunities and renown. Pippin explains to the audience in song that he had always believed himself to be “Extraordinary,” and life on a farm did not feed his ambition.

Framed as a show being spirited along by a troupe of theatrical players providing narration and commentary, the production concludes with Pippin realizing the extreme minuteness of his existence and the fact that, even being stripped of every worldly possession, being with the ones he loves is of the utmost importance. Though the musical borrows figures adapted from reality, the majority of the show presents fictionalized situations and interactions between characters.

Other characters in *Pippin* include the Leading Player, an enigmatic narrator who attempts to give Pippin insight throughout the show and becomes angry when his instructions have little impact. Supporting him is a group of performers who fill various roles, including members of court and soldiers in Charlemagne's fight against the Goths. Charlemagne himself serves a comedic purpose for the plot, explaining war in a patter number, "War is a Science."<sup>13</sup> Pippin's stepbrother, Lewis, is portrayed as, with the help of his mother, wanting to assume the emperorship one day, though, as Charlemagne points out, he is "an asshole."

The female characters represent three distinct age ranges and personalities. Fastrada, Pippin's stepmother, and portrayed as a kept woman, schemes to put her son on the throne. Berthe is a feisty sexagenarian who has complete faith in Pippin. And Catherine, Pippin's eventual love interest, is initially shown to be coerced into participating in the narrative by the Leading Player, but grows to be one of the most of the female characters, later shown to take a stand against the troupe alongside Pippin during the finale.

In *Pippin*, due to the size of the cast, the range of personalities portrayed, and functions the individual characters serve in enhancing the plot, a variety of musical styles help to tell the story. Burns experimented with groups of instruments to help define the characters and drive the plot forward. Many of the characters make only a few appearances throughout the show, and therefore require a memorable musical moment to aid in separating them from other characters. This is the case, for example, for Pippin's grandmother, Berthe, who participates in one distinctive solo number. Other figures, such as the Leading Player of the acting troupe, and Pippin himself, appear frequently, and thus perform in a number of styles.

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<sup>13</sup> Laird, *The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz*, 65.

### **The Score: The Leading Player**

The Leading Player is presented as the least static of the characters in the show, performing in an array of musical styles, depending on the mood of the scene or character with whom he interacts, adapting to his surroundings. As such, the instrumentation is equally flexible for this character. However, that is the point of the Leading Player: he serves as a frame for the show, offering something akin to narration and sharing wisdom with Pippin over the course of his journey. Ultimately, in a twist from the inviting figure detailed at the start of the show, the Leading Player intends to stage Pippin's most memorable act — immolating himself— but Pippin's refusal causes the entire troupe at the end to peel away the various layers of showmanship (scenery, costume, and lights) and exit the stage. As such, the Leading Player exhibits behavior of both a protagonist and antagonist, creating conflict in the minds of the audience.

The opening number, “Magic to Do,” in an introduction, the Leading Player and the chorus allow the viewers a glimpse at the company. Collectively, through the song they foreshadow events to come in a spectacle, singing lines such as “battles, barbarous and bloody” and “intrigue, plots to bring disaster.”<sup>14</sup> The cast also interacts with the audience, inviting the viewers to join them for the performance. The characterization of the Leading Player at this point is friendly and inviting.

Similar to *Hair*, the very first musical sound heard by the audience is that of a sustained note played by the synthesizer, functioning as both a marker of the soundscape to come, as well as an alteration of the sense of time as meter and rhythm are not immediately apparent.<sup>15</sup> This is especially significant for those who have some indication of the temporal setting of the show in

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<sup>14</sup> See Stephen Schwartz, *Pippin*, Decca 012 159 613-2, 2000. CD. Hereafter abbreviated to “OR” for “Original Recording.” Track 1, 1:30.

<sup>15</sup> OR, Track 1, 0:00.

the Middle Ages and expect music from that era. Primarily, the music for this number is a marriage between orchestral and rock instruments, introducing the timbres to be heard, and featuring a steady groove frequently played by the piano, and stingers from upper winds and strings. After the piano first enters, the groove pattern sounds in some form throughout the song. The pattern recurs at the very end of the show as an outro; in that appearance, portions of the theme are provided through chorus vocals.<sup>16</sup>

Such accompanying patterns were common in popular songs of the early 1970s, usually played by the piano or electric bass at the onset of a song and repeated throughout the remainder of the music in some form or by some instrument in the ensemble. A song such as Carole King's "I Feel the Earth Move" (1971), is indicative, with a steady, similarly syncopated groove supplied by the piano.<sup>17</sup>

Almost immediately after the piano enters in "Magic to Do," the drum set and electric bass also join in, further adding to the popular flavor of the song to that point.<sup>18</sup> Initially, the drum set supplies an *ostinato*—though this changes over the course of the number—and the electric bass plays on the downbeats, harkening to their functions in a typical rock band as the rhythmic reference point. The opening number, then, though visually and verbally taking the audience to the Carolingian Middle Ages, is intended for the ears to hear music reminiscent of popular styles.

Once the groove is firmly established for the listener, the next sounds come from the chorus, entering on the syllable "ooh."<sup>19</sup> Though the register and modal melody suggest some

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<sup>16</sup> *Pippin* (2013 Revival), Theatre on Film and Tape Archive, The New York Library for the Performing Arts, viewed June 27, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> A song released in the same year as *Pippin*, The Temptation's "Papa was a Rollin' Stone" likewise features an opening groove that becomes layered as the song progresses.

<sup>18</sup> OR, Track 1, 0:15.

<sup>19</sup> OR, Track 1, 0:23.

mysterious element in *Pippin*, promised in the lyrics, there is another association to popular songs of the era with this vocal technique. Backup singers in many styles, among them rock, funk, and prominently in Motown, often sang on open vowels under the lead singer or during introductions to songs.<sup>20</sup>

The approach of repetitive popular musical hooks combined with orchestral instrumentation strongly aligns the orchestrational method of this show to *Jesus Christ Superstar* and, to a degree, *Hair*, particularly in regard to the overture. The groove pattern recurs later in the show, and as it is heard frequently throughout “Magic to Do,” it becomes memorable for the audience, not unlike the opening “Heaven on Their Minds” motive from *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Similarly, the introduction of the vast array of timbres from the opening offers a point of reference for the audience. Despite disparate settings and characters, some semblance of ties between shows of this era begin to appear.

Because “Magic to Do” does promise the audience some “magic,” the orchestral arrangement features the use of several instrumental sound effects that further create an otherworldly atmosphere. These include *glissandi* on the harp and bell trees, which evoke a sense of spells being cast, as well as an eerie countermelody supplied by the alto flute on the words “exciting, mystic, and exotic.”<sup>21</sup> The low, reedy quality of the alto flute not only enhances the mysterious nature of the lyrics, but evokes other popular songs of the time that include such musical sounds, referencing flute solos in “Nights in White Satin” (1967) by The Moody Blues or

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<sup>20</sup> Examples of this include “What Becomes of the Broken Hearted?” (1966) by Jimmy Ruffin, “Just My Imagination” (1971) by The Temptations, and “When a Man Loves a Woman” (1966) by Percy Sledge. The use of backup singers is also a prominent feature of three other shows discussed in this study: *Promises, Promises*, *Grease* and *The Wiz*.

<sup>21</sup> OR, Track 1, 0:48.



“California Dreamin’” (1966) by The Mamas and the Papas.<sup>22</sup> The Leading Player in particular, when singing solo, is accompanied at several points by glockenspiel, a percussive instrument associated with the mysterious.<sup>23</sup> Further adding to the ambiguity of the Leading Player as a character is the application of modal mixture in “Magic to Do,” alternating from A minor to its parallel major in the accompaniment.<sup>24</sup> This inability to immediately establish one tonality can create an atmosphere of suspicion.

The strings, accompanying the words “illusion, fantasy to study” are instructed to play “quasi chime,” evoking bell tones. In some instances, bell tones, reminding the audience of a clock’s chimes, can also provide correlations to the passage or loss of time.<sup>25</sup> While these links perhaps were not intentional, they might add another layer of meaning to the music for some audience members.

Therefore, in Wagnerian fashion, in addition to the behavior of the characters, the sets, costuming, and movement, the instruments serve an enormous purpose in depicting the show as fantastic right from the very beginning, and the Leading Player as an exotic figure. These effects rarely reappear during the show, but do help serve as an outro as the tiers of performance are gradually stripped away by the end. Laying the groundwork for the show to be interpreted as not purely historical fact and with a warped sense of humor is also important for the events that follow.

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<sup>22</sup> Music composed for the alto flute has historically included an acknowledgement to mysticism, mystery, or Otherness in musical works. Though “Nights in White Satin” has been considered a tale of unrequited love, a spoken-word poem in the original release of the song references illusions, and “California Dreamin’” was reportedly inspired by band member John Phillips’s dreams. Prominent alto flute parts can also be found in Stravinsky’s *The Rite of Spring*, Ravel’s *Daphnis et Chloe*, and Holst’s *The Planets*.

<sup>23</sup> OR, Track 1, 1:46. In Hector Berlioz’s treatise on instrumentation, he characterized the glockenspiel’s tone as “soft, mysterious and extremely refined.”

<sup>24</sup> Laird, *The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz*, 63.

<sup>25</sup> OR Track 1, 1:49.

As the Leading Player invites the audience to “join us, sit where everybody can see,” the orchestra builds up gradually and layers each individual instrument’s or section’s grooves or chords. This procedure begins with the lower strings and ascends in range, climaxing with the entire company singing the main melodic line of “Magic to Do.”<sup>26</sup> At this point, many different timbres have been introduced and combined, as they continue to be throughout the duration of the show. This technique had previously been heard in the overture to *Jesus Christ Superstar*, where the rock instruments played individual grooves before being combined and the number culminates with the full orchestra.

“Magic to Do” features several instrumental breaks. The first occurs after the cast have all made their entrances and turn to address the audience and greet them. At this point, a dissonant fanfare sounds in the brasses and winds, playing chords reminiscent of the opening piano motive, keeping that pattern constantly in the ears of the viewers.<sup>27</sup> Almost immediately, the pit drops out, save for the electric bass and drum set, playing short motives repeatedly as the cast converses casually with the audience.<sup>28</sup>

“Magic to Do” functions not only as an introduction to the show itself, but serves in particular to showcase the musical’s narrator. Though not the titular character, the Leading Player is the most musically rich figure in the show, performing in a bevy of styles, including rock, vaudeville, swing, and as part of a chorale, among others, meaning that a number of different instrumental combinations accompany him. Involvement in such a variety of musical styles makes it difficult to align him with any one style or theme, or get a true sense of the character’s intentions

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<sup>26</sup> OR, Track 1, 2:02.

<sup>27</sup> OR, Track 1, 2:28.

<sup>28</sup> OR, Track 1, 2:44.

from the start.<sup>29</sup> The resulting ambiguity of the character is surely intentional, as he serves more as a commentator than a character directly involved in the action until the production's final scene.

In the opening number, the aforementioned steady rock beat played by electric bass and keyboards supply accompaniment for the Leading Player. His vocals are then supported by electric guitar playing a prominent riff, foreshadowing what might become a primarily rock show, despite the historical period in question. As the song progresses and more of the players enter to sing "Magic to Do," the accompaniment grows more traditional in nature, with a flute countermelody, harp *glissandi*, violins supporting the chorus on "Parts to perform, hearts to warm," and high brasses playing fanfares between verses. The marked changes in the various sections of the song indicate immediately the Leading Player's and the chorus's flexibility.

In "Glory," also featuring the Leading Player and his supporting troupe, the tone is quite different. During this number, the characters (acting as soldiers of the Holy Roman Empire) have gone into battle against the Goths under Charlemagne's orders and appear to be winning. The opening theme of the song, sung by the Leading Player alone, includes the accompaniment of orchestral strings, brass, winds, and synthesized organ.<sup>30</sup> The scoring suggests sacredness, because instead of playing grooves as in earlier numbers, the accompaniment begins the number playing sustained notes, and emphasizes the sound of the synthesized organ, a timbre associated by many with religious services and settings.

The following section is drastically different in nature, both in style and in the instruments used to help support the vocalist. As the Leading Player continues the song, the initial

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<sup>29</sup> I refer to the Leading Player as "he" or "him" throughout this chapter because the original character was portrayed by male performer, Ben Vereen, though in the 2013 Broadway revival the role was cast with a female performer, Patina Miller.

<sup>30</sup> OR, Track 4, 0:00.

instrumentation stays more or less intact, with the addition of percussion playing jazz rhythms on drum set, mallets providing a series of runs, and tambourine, creating a much stricter sense of rhythm than the sustained notes in the previous portion of the scene.<sup>31</sup> Here, the lyrics describe the horrors of war and casualties, such as, “Blood is red as sunset, blood is warmer than wine.” Simultaneously during these lines, however, the winds play scoops and falls and the brasses use Harmon mutes to change the character from the previous pure, reverent sound to a progressively more jazz-like flavor. Somewhat later in the song, the melody sounds in the piano in a major mode, accompanied by a walking bass line, and temple blocks. This continuous mixing of styles further solidifies the character’s ambiguity.

In “Simple Joys,” Burns used the electric guitar, bass, and percussion playing *ostinati* under the Leading Player’s vocals. Whereas groove patterns established at the onset of songs usually continue uninterrupted throughout, here the first pattern heard breaks at several points. Immediately before the Leading Player enters, the accompaniment drops out completely, putting the focus unquestionably on him. More auxiliary percussion sounds—such as shakers, temple blocks, and ratchet—at various points to emphasize certain words or the beginnings of phrases, such as “rather be a left-handed flea.”<sup>32</sup> During the third verse, for two lines, orchestral strings make an appearance.

In “On the Right Track,” the introduction consists of trills on the flute before *ostinati* in the piano and bass enter, again setting up what might be a jazz- or rock-like number, which would harken back to several earlier numbers.<sup>33</sup> The piano groove is particularly not unlike the introduction to “Magic to Do,” conveying the same sense of mystery about the Leading Player.

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<sup>31</sup> OR, Track 4, 0:44.

<sup>32</sup> OR, Track 5, 0:22.

<sup>33</sup> OR, Track 10, 0:00.

Throughout the verse of “On the Right Track,” high winds, xylophone, and high muted brass play a series of chromatic runs.<sup>34</sup> The meter changes throughout, as do the accompanying instruments, which shift between piano to winds and then to percussion to only finger snaps provided by the chorus and back to the opening orchestration.<sup>35</sup> This is perhaps also indicative of the company’s perception of Pippin’s apparent inability to make decisions following the death of his father. It is worth noting that there are admitted differences between the score for the stage production and the cast recording for this number; a dance break is edited out and additional seventh and ninth chords are included to give the song a stronger jazz flavor.<sup>36</sup>

The Leading Player interacts with Pippin during this number to provide him with reassurance that he is making the right decisions. At first Pippin sings in a call-and-response with the Leading Player, becoming at ease with him before growing angry at the prospect of never finding his purpose. This is the one moment in the number that is dissonant and features a sudden, held chord played *sforzando* by the piano and brass.<sup>37</sup> Though the Leading Player states, “Easy baby, you’re on the right track,” this instance indicates, through the use of instrumentation, that something could be amiss between the two characters, which comes into play in the second act.

In the show’s finale, the Leading Player invites Pippin to “think about the sun” and his legacy, wishing him to put on the biggest spectacle he can. As the number begins, a nervous scalar pattern sounds at first by the flute and then by the oboe.<sup>38</sup> Despite the tonal nature of the piano

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<sup>34</sup> An example of this occurs at OR, Track 10, 0:38.

<sup>35</sup> Schwartz has acknowledged that the composition of this song was partly a compromise between him and Fosse in order to create an opportunity for Pippin to dance. At Fosse’s suggestion, Schwartz said that he “cut every extraneous word of a lyric I could.” This slight unevenness of the music also plays into the dynamic between Pippin and the Leading Player. Carol de Giere, *Defying Gravity: The Creative Career of Stephen Schwartz from Godspell to Wicked* (New York: Applause Theatre & Cinema Books, 2008), 105.

<sup>36</sup> Laird, *The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz*, 70.

<sup>37</sup> OR, Track 10, 3:20.

<sup>38</sup> OR, Track 15. The flute makes its first entrance at 0:03 and the oboe first enters at 0:47.

accompaniment that follows, the dissonant interjections from the high winds convey a sense of danger.<sup>39</sup> The finale brings back the company and other characters seen throughout the show, all of whom aid in propelling Pippin toward his possible untimely end. The sudden change in the Leading Player's apparent motivations is not directly musically heralded at an earlier point in the show, making the shift that much more jarring for the audience, marking him as a character with ulterior motives.

### **The Score: Pippin**

The title character, when singing alone, carries accompaniment by piano and traditional instrumentation, which often tend to include orchestral strings, giving Pippin the association, at the start of the show, as being more naïve and pure. In contrast to the Leading Player's array of styles and instrumentational combinations, Pippin's music is less expressive until later in the show, when he has garnered a deeper and more nuanced worldview. In "Corner of the Sky," for example, the piano plays a series of *ostinati* over chord changes that modulate along with the vocal lines, with the aid of high strings, winds, and later organ, also playing *ostinati*.<sup>40</sup> Due to the repetitive nature of the accompaniment, the focus of this number is on the text, which introduces the character to the audience and supports Pippin's personality. In much the same vein as Jesus in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Pippin's musical characterization is fairly pure in sound—he does not initially sing anything overtly rock unless singing with someone else or has become angry. Much later in the show, after he has developed and matured, his accompaniment becomes more diverse.

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<sup>39</sup> These patterns bear a superficial resemblance to the opening of the fifth movement of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*, in which the scene is a gathering of witches and otherworldly creatures for a funeral.

<sup>40</sup> OR, Track 2, 0:00.

The second time “Corner of the Sky” occurs is at the end of the show, when Pippin has been stripped of his worldly possessions, and nearly his life, by the Leading Player and the company. The rippling piano *ostinato* pattern from the first iteration is not present; instead, synthesizer plays a slightly different pattern. Pippin then comments on the song, noting that he no longer accepts it optimism, to the accompaniment of piano and winds.<sup>41</sup> The brass repeats Pippin’s melody.

In an extended ending, the very last time the “Corner of the Sky” melody sounds it is unaccompanied and sung by Theo alone, the rest of the cast having exited the stage, though the opening *ostinato* then recurs as a fade-out.<sup>42</sup> This complete lack of supporting instruments is significant as it confirms to the audience that life is cyclical and now Theo, rather than Pippin, will subsequently embark on his own journey of self-discovery, perhaps shaped by his experiences during the show.

The use of such instruments as flute, harp, and high strings as accompaniment in the first instance of “Corner of the Sky” also creates a heavenly atmosphere to associate with Pippin’s machinations. He is aspiring to something higher and slightly out of reach, and the higher ranges and religious symbolism associated with these instruments help support this portrayal. When Pippin instead is naïve or a hopeless buffoon, as in “War is a Science,” he is accompanied by instruments that create a more comedic tone, such as mallet percussion.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> OR, Track 15, 3:49.

<sup>42</sup> This musical moment is not available on the commercial recording of the original Broadway production, but can be heard on the recording for the revival production. This changed ending came about due to a London production making Theo an older character to work with child labor laws and the creative team seeing the potential in suggesting to Schwartz that Theo could follow Pippin’s path. Laird, *The Musical Theater of Stephen Schwartz*, 60.

<sup>43</sup> OR, Track 3, 1:40.

When Pippin sings “With You,” during his first sexual interaction, he is accompanied not only by piano, but also a synthesized harpsichord, horn, flute, and orchestral strings.<sup>44</sup> The composition is fairly similar to “Corner of the Sky” in that the keyboard plays a series of repeating patterns and the other instruments are mostly included to add color. Again, the focus is meant to be on the words Pippin is singing regarding his newfound affinity for women, and the harpsichord, perhaps ironically, adds in a slightly more traditional musical flavor.

In “Morning Glow,” the percussion plays a steady rock pattern, but the instruments layered on top include synthesized organs, orchestral strings, piano, brass, and celesta. Pippin is, at this point of the show, still hopeful and less jaded than he becomes in the second act. The instrumentation of this number reflects this in the use of more traditional sounds; the organ, though synthesized, allows for a more reverent tone.

When Pippin sings with another central figure, he reflects the tone or character of that song. This is not a new approach to writing for theatrical figures, having been a technique of composers for centuries; however, changing the manner in which Pippin presents himself affects the overall depiction of the character. For example, as Charlemagne describes war tactics, Pippin interrupts him and sings a march, complete with the xylophones and high brass playing fanfares above the melody line, emphasizing the militaristic, yet comical, nature of the number.<sup>45</sup> His father cuts him off during both of his interjections. Though the audience is introduced to Pippin as an idealist, this change quickly demonstrates that he, although eager, is unable to match his father’s martial understanding.

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<sup>44</sup> OR, Track 7.

<sup>45</sup> OR, Track 3, 1:35.



When Pippin sings “On the Right Track” with the Leading Player, he mimics the former’s vocal lines with the previously mentioned mixed instrumental accompaniment before breaking down at the thought of never finding his purpose. The smooth jazz influence perhaps suggests a certain ease for Pippin as he comes to terms with his lot in life. The call-and-response nature between Pippin and the Leading Player also subliminally begins to show the former coming under the latter’s sway.

The song Pippin sings that features the most rock accompaniment is “Extraordinary,” which includes piano (playing *glissandi*), percussion, electric bass, and toward the end of the number, electric guitar. At this point in the show, Pippin is more sure of himself and slightly upset at his “extraordinariness” going unrecognized and being made to do manual labor on Catherine’s farm, providing comedic overtones. His irritation and edginess invites rock instrumentation; this again is not unlike the earlier musical characterization of Jesus, who becomes aligned with rock music when angered, or Chuck in *Promises, Promises* when he sings the title number in frustration. However, Pippin is also accompanied at various points in the song by synthesized organ and strings, which mirror his vocal lines, and xylophone playing a repeating four-note *ostinato*.<sup>46</sup> This rather abrupt change in accompaniment could also be a nod to Pippin becoming slightly more assertive while still retaining some of his earlier naiveté. The reappearance of the xylophone also creates a bond between this song and “War Is a Science,” and although Pippin’s outward behavior is different between the numbers, the audience can recognize that, in both cases, he is being ridiculous.

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<sup>46</sup> OR, Track 12, 1:02.

Singing with Catherine, with whom he falls in love, Pippin is accompanied mainly by piano, which switches between playing the vocal lines and *ostinati*, and electric bass playing downbeats. Keeping with traditional theatrical love songs, high strings and winds appear, along with synthesized harpsichord and bells, generally playing countermelodies. Occasionally during the number, an orchestral instrument will accompany the voice, such as Catherine accompanied by the low clarinet and also piano.<sup>47</sup> This is also reflective of popular love songs of the time that featured mostly piano accompaniment and perhaps some more traditional instrumentation, such as “Your Song” (1970) by Elton John.

### **The Score: The Women**

The three main female characters (Berthe, Fastrada, and Catherine) are each characterized differently through their music, reinforcing the disparities in personalities and functions for the show. All three women are not nearly featured as often as the male characters, especially Pippin and the Leading Player. Because of their lesser visibility, their songs require memorable musical treatments.

Berthe, Pippin’s grandmother, who is a cantankerous character, like Charlemagne, has a comic number, “No Time at All,” but unlike the aforementioned figure, the instrumentation does not change rapidly. While vaudevillian in nature, the accompanying voices are keyboards, electric bass, and guitar playing walking bass lines and *ostinati*.<sup>48</sup> Winds and brass enter in gradually, first playing long tones and then supplying downbeats. The first set of instruments heard remain in play throughout the entirety of the song, which is somewhat repetitive, while the audience is invited to

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<sup>47</sup> OR, Track 13, 0:18.

<sup>48</sup> OR, Track 6.

sing along. As her number is less complex than other songs, her simple desires are likewise demonstrated, as all she wants is time and Pippin's happiness.

Fastrada, one of the villains of the piece, is represented by a waltz, with mainly piano, bassoon and cello playing on downbeats, oboe, flute, and orchestral strings.<sup>49</sup> Her scoring is very traditional, and seemingly innocent. She continually attributes her conniving to wanting to be a good mother to her son, Lewis, whom she wants to be king instead of Pippin. At the start of each verse, the mode appears to be minor, and then when she moves into the refrain, the mode becomes major. This is indicative of her personality, which on the surface is pleasant, but she is capable of terrible things, like exiling Berthe and plotting Charlemagne's murder at Pippin's hands. The circuitous associations of the waltz similarly suggest Fastrada's nature of dancing around other characters to get what she wants. At the very end of the song, the music ceases to be a waltz and becomes more rock, with the addition of percussion and electric bass to the piano during the outro, and a meter change from triple into duple. This abrupt change perhaps signifies her reaction to her plan's success.

Catherine is musically equivalent to Pippin in that she is not overtly characterized by rock, though she is accompanied by more prominent percussive *ostinati* than her male counterpart, and stays within a particular kind of song—slow, lyrical, and repetitive. Catherine is accompanied momentarily by a harp—a feminine-gendered instrument, and symbolic of heavenliness—as well as the organ in “Kind of Woman.” In “I Guess I’ll Miss the Man,” much as with Mary Magdalene in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, her accompaniment is more folk-like, with guitar playing an *ostinato*, countermelodies in the high strings and winds, and noticeable lack of percussion. Even in singing

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<sup>49</sup> OR, Track 8, 0:21.

“Love Song” with Pippin, as discussed above, the accompaniment is repetitive and fairly traditional. Thus, Catherine is represented as fairly pure in sound, like Pippin, in that her styles are static and the instrumental colors used are traditional and non-intrusive.

“Kind of Woman” depicts Catherine as a comic character. Her entrance and dialogue with the Leading Player suggest to the audience some coercion in being a part of the production. However, she is also shown to have some attachment to Pippin, finding him lying on the side of the road. A piano number in the same vein as “Corner of the Sky,” with an additional *ostinato* in the drum set, it directly links her to Pippin. There are two major differences between the numbers. First, orchestral strings enter to highlight the climax of the song, serving to both add an element of excitement alongside a harp *glissando* as well as helping to project Catherine as a soft and caring personality.<sup>50</sup> Secondly, Catherine’s number features the use of unseen backup singers, tying her to the portrayal of women in other productions in this study, including Fran from *Promises*, *Promises* and Dorothy from *The Wiz*.<sup>51</sup>

### **The Score: Male Characters**

The character of Charlemagne has the most musical diversity within a single song, outside of the Leading Player. He is depicted as blustery; even after he is killed by his son and brought back to life, he is seemingly unfazed. In “War Is a Science,” he is accompanied by traditional instruments, and by changing groupings of instruments and varying classical styles. His constant changes of mood and thought are shown, both toward his war plans (which excite him) and toward his son (who annoys him). The first accompanimental patterns associated with him are on the xylophone. Using an instrument that has a bright, resonant timbre and one that is associated largely

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<sup>50</sup> OR, Track 11, 0:59.

<sup>51</sup> Please see chapters 2 and 8 for discussions of those characters.

with novelty songs solidifies his role as comedic. For example, on two rhyming lines of poetry, the first line is accompanied by strings playing an ascending figure, and the second line by winds playing a descending figure. The instrumentation changes quite rapidly as well, from English horn to synthesized harpsichord to winds and brass to auxiliary percussion and back again. Even when interrupted by Pippin, the orchestration changes to muted brass and percussion, both snare and auxiliary, playing march patterns and fanfares. Some of the winds and brasses provide sound effects in this number; for example, while mentioning “moving across the valley,” the French horns play a hunting call, and during the line “all our plans they smother,” the xylophone plays a descending *glissando*.

The battle sequence between the Holy Roman Empire and the Goths is musically poignant. Bob Fosse’s choreography features a trio of dancers dubbed the “Manson Trio,” perhaps due to their movement amongst corpses like the Manson family themselves. With musical irony, their dance is treated like an earlier vaudeville number, accompanied mainly by keyboard playing in the style of a dance hall.<sup>52</sup> This upbeat sensibility during a moment of struggle adds an additional layer of ambiguity to the musical because it is difficult to discern immediately how the characters feel about their involvement in the battle.

Theo has no song of his own, though he participates in a sung prayer for his dead pet duck alongside Pippin and sings a portion of “Corner of the Sky” as the show closes.<sup>53</sup> His purpose in the show is primarily as a catalyst for Pippin to reevaluate his life. He initially is distant to Pippin, rebuffing his attempts to bond, up until his duck passes away. Following that, Theo serves as a

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<sup>52</sup> OR, Track 4, 2:30.

<sup>53</sup> *Pippin* (2013 Revival), Theatre on Film and Tape Archive, The New York Library for the Performing Arts, viewed June 27, 2015. These moments are unavailable on the commercial recording.

shadow or echo to Pippin, and appears to take over his role as dreamer at the conclusion of the show. As Pippin has chosen a life with Catherine and responsibilities away from the crown, he no longer needs the youthful naiveté he displayed at the beginning of the show.

Pippin's stepbrother Lewis also has no song of his own, though he participates in the larger group numbers or as a background character in smaller numbers. This lack of musical support for the character could serve to reinforce how little his presence impacts Pippin's journey overall; it could also mean that, whereas other characters are given a memorable musical moment for the audience's benefit, Lewis is meant to be more of a tool for the characterizations of Fastrada and Pippin than a crucial piece of the overarching narrative.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, the musical support the characters receive in *Pippin* truly help to define their personalities. Pippin (and Catherine to some extent), as the main character and in love, is depicted through light, repetitive, sonically pleasing songs and traditional instruments. The comic characters of Charlemagne, Berthe, and even Fastrada are depicted through up-tempo songs with occasional changes of mood or character. In Charlemagne's case, this is to show that while trying to explain battle strategies, there are many trains of thoughts, while in Fastrada's case, it demonstrates her two-faced nature. And the Leading Player sings in many styles, supported by many different combinations of voices in order to show his adaptability and his changing role throughout the show.

When the musical was revived in 2013, rather than re-present the show as it was in its earliest forms, many changes were made to keep the material fresh. This included, most notably,

placing the show in a circus format with performers akin to Cirque du Soleil. However, some of the score was similarly adapted for more recent audiences.

Though the pit requirements remained relatively the same (reeds, trumpet, trombone, orchestral strings, electric guitar and bass, keyboards, drum kit, and percussion) the original pit employed almost twice as many musicians, and included a harp player. This could be in part due to a change in location; where the original played at the Imperial and Minskoff Theaters, the revival occurred at the Music Box Theatre, which is a slightly smaller venue. It could also be due to the more streamlined approach to instrumentation for Broadway. But changes were made primarily due to the involvement of a new orchestrator: Larry Hochman. Hochman's background comes mainly in theory and composition, with degrees from Manhattan, Eastman, and Mannes, which led to work composing, conducting, and orchestrating for film, television, and theatre.<sup>54</sup>

While a different orchestrator was included for the revival, some homage is still paid to the original. "Magic to Do" still begins with a piano *ostinato* and layering of instrumental timbres; "Corner of the Sky" is primarily a piano number. The re-orchestrations are mostly found in the numbers of the supporting characters, and it is likely some choices were made in keeping with the circus theme.

Overall, *Pippin* is representative of a show that combines influences from rock and traditional styles, creating a diverse musical palette to describe characters. The production is also indicative of the collaborative process, with the resulting score coming to fruition with recorded input from Schwartz, Burns, and Fosse. While *Pippin* has acknowledged similarities to other

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<sup>54</sup> "Larry Hochman," <http://www.larryhochman.net/bio.html>, accessed on June 6, 2016. Hochman shares a Tony Award for Best Orchestrations with Stephen Oremus for *The Book of Mormon*.

musicals in this study, it also has one of the more intricate scores, demonstrating the amount of effort an orchestrator puts toward creating the desired sound.



## **Chapter 7: A Chorus Line**

“In a claustrophobic space below stage level, 18 musicians and a conductor, their instruments, music stands and microphones, are crammed together with just enough working room so that the drummer doesn’t beat on the piano player or a trombonist hit the conductor in a vital spot. At every performance the trick is accomplished of integrating musicians and cast into a harmonized unit without any visual contact.”<sup>1</sup>

An influential show that was set in the then-present 1970s, much like *Company*, *A Chorus Line* (1975) conveys the story of a bevy of hopeful dancers auditioning for limited positions in the chorus of a new, unnamed Broadway production. In addition to watching the dancers learn and perform choreography in a variety of styles to demonstrate their range, when the director pointedly asks the cast to speak openly about themselves, the audience is also witness to each of them providing details of their personal lives in turn. More subtly, the dancers describe their fears about not being cast, lying about their ages or personal histories, or of hurting themselves and becoming expendable in a career so dependent on physicality and youth. Though this interview process is not a typical component of a real-life audition, it functions as a framing device for the show. It serves to give some focus to each character, allowing viewers to recognize each dancer’s individuality when chorus members inevitably end up working as a unified group.

While a show of this nature could solely portray hopefuls trying to break into entertainment, *A Chorus Line* also examines dancers who are trying to grasp at their last chance to be cast, elderly for the business in their late twenties and thirties. The characters’ backstories range from pleasant upbringings and solid marriages to parental neglect and discoveries of sexual identity, among other topics, covering the gamut from happy to sad. Each character is desperate

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<sup>1</sup> Ernest Leogrande, “Pippin’s Office is the Pit(s)!” *The New Yorker*, July 7, 1976.

for a chance to be in the show, mostly in order to survive financially. One dancer in particular, Cassie, who has a romantic history with the director, hopes to return to the chorus after her solo career has failed. Despite individualizing the dancers, when they reach the culminating number, “One,” they are shown to be capable of being the functioning, indistinguishable unit a chorus line must be.

In the spirit of other productions discussed for this project, the different styles of included music serve primarily to individualize the characters. Topics for further discussion here include group numbers, in which the intended “chorus” comes together, individual or smaller group numbers, and associations with other styles. Unlike most of the other shows in this study, the orchestrational approach was a highly collaborative effort, which will be unpacked as well. Like *Company*, *A Chorus Line* is more contemporary in setting, which allows for modern musical styles to be employed to reinforce this additional angle. Since the show culminates with a number from a new production, markers of earlier Broadway styles are similarly included.

### **History of the Show**

The creation of this musical came about in an unusual way. Director/choreographer Michael Bennett (1943-1987), rather than find a pre-written script or adapting from pre-existing sources, instead invited his friends, professional dancers, to a special workshop.<sup>2</sup> During this session, and during subsequent meetings, he asked the dancers to talk openly about their lives, their working experiences, and any anxieties about auditions and their careers, all while a tape

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<sup>2</sup>In addition to his work on *A Chorus Line*, Michael Bennett also served as the choreographer for *Promises*, *Promises* and *Company*, among other shows. He also directed several other shows, including *Follies* (1971), *Twigs* (1971), and *Dreamgirls* (1981). “Michael Bennett,” *The Internet Broadway Database*, <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-cast-staff/michael-bennett-7716>, accessed October 28, 2016.

recorder was running.<sup>3</sup> The experiences the group members described varied from ostracizing to bonding, and excerpts of tales were lifted to form a working script about these characters in an audition setting. Many of the dancers present were retained to portray fictionalized versions of themselves, and some stories were split between multiple characters, most notably those of dancer Donna McKechnie, whose stories were divided between Cassie (the role she played with the original company) and Maggie. The costume designs for the production were even based on the type of rehearsal clothing the interviewed dancers tended to wear. Denny Flinn notes:

Michael, Tony [Stevens] and Michon [Peacock] had written out one hundred questions for each performer to answer: real name, stage name, age, astrological sign, where you came from, what your childhood was like, life as a dancer, and on to your experiences coming to New York and in the professional theater. Everyone sat on the floor in a circle and Michael laid down the ground rules. Going around in a circle, each dancer would answer the fundamental biographical questions, structured in sections: childhood, adolescence, pre-New York dancing career, and New York to the present. Each dancer would speak about the same subject, then they would move on to the next and go around again. Anyone in the circle could ask additional questions...<sup>4</sup>

Marvin Hamlisch (1944-2012), a popular songwriter, was hired to write the score, focusing on setting a handful of the memories to music, with lyricist Edward Kleban (1939-1987) assisting with the words. Some tales recorded during the sessions seemed more appropriate to music, while others, such as the story of one character being discovered by his parents working in a drag show, were presented as monologues to convey their poignancy. Hamlisch's diverse musical background

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<sup>3</sup> The recorded sessions served not only as the inspiration for the plot, but for the dialogue and song lyrics as well, with some words lifted verbatim and some slightly altered.

<sup>4</sup> Flinn, Denny Martin. *What They Did for Love: The Untold Story Behind the Making of A Chorus Line* (New York, Bantam Books, 1989), pgs. 15-16.

allowed him to seize opportunities for a wide array of musical styles to further individualize the characters.

Hamlisch's professional career truly began at the age of six, when he was admitted into the Juilliard School as a pianist, one of the youngest students in attendance. One of his first jobs outside of school was as a rehearsal pianist and vocal arranger for *Funny Girl*, starring Barbra Streisand, in 1964. He continued to work in a capacity as both a dance and vocal arranger for such productions as *Golden Rainbow* (1968), *Minnie's Boys* (1970), and *Liza* (1974). Hamlisch later garnered work as a composer in films, including *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977) and *Sophie's Choice* (1982), among others, and his songs also appeared in a multitude of television programs as well.<sup>5</sup>

Outside of theater and film, Hamlisch's fame was primarily as a writer of popular songs. As a teenager, he composed "Sunshine, Lollipops, and Rainbows," which became a hit song for singer Lesley Gore in 1963. Having forged a relationship with Barbra Streisand, he wrote several songs for her, including "The Way We Were," and later went to work with Liza Minnelli, Judy Garland, and Groucho Marx.<sup>6</sup> Given that those artists came from different styles, Hamlisch's ability to be compositionally flexible became an early reason for his success.

The pinnacle of Hamlisch's theatrical career was *A Chorus Line*. Though he did create the music for productions throughout the following decades, most were revues featuring such artists as Shirley MacLaine, Andre DeShields, and Liza Minnelli, not unlike the theatrical trajectory followed by Burt Bacharach. The latter portion of his career was spent as a conductor for various

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<sup>5</sup> "Marvin Hamlisch," *The Internet Broadway Database*, [http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0006121/?ref\\_=nv\\_sr\\_1](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0006121/?ref_=nv_sr_1), accessed June 2, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> The title song Hamlisch wrote, with Marilyn Bergman as lyricist, for 1974's *The Way We Were*, performed by Streisand, was named the top pop song of that year and has been re-recorded and used in a variety of media.

pops concert series around the country, where he drew on his relationships with other artists and performed many popular pieces with the orchestra, including music from *A Chorus Line*.

### **Creating the Score**

The orchestrations for *A Chorus Line* were created by a group of arrangers rather than a single figure, including three main orchestrators, who divided up the songs, and four additional orchestrators for dance numbers and underscoring. Jonathan Tunick, Bill Byers (1927-1996), and Hershy Kay (1919-1981) provided the arrangements for most of the score, while Philip J. Lang (1911-1986), Harold Wheeler (also the orchestrator for *The Wiz*), Ralph Burns (the main orchestrator for *Pippin*, along with Tunick), and Larry Wilcox (who was later replaced by Tunick), orchestrated other numbers.<sup>7</sup> The instrumentation for the production required four reed players who could triple on flutes, clarinets, and saxophones, three trumpets, three trombones, an electric and upright bassist, two keyboards, harp, guitar (acoustic, electric, and banjo), and two percussionists.<sup>8</sup> The combination of input from multiple orchestrators and a palette of instrumental timbres allowed for broad accompaniments for characters developed during the workshops.<sup>9</sup>

On the whole, the music of *A Chorus Line* ranges from frenetic to sentimental to serviceable, catering to the character or situation at hand. However, with the setting of the 1970s, which has been retained in the 2006 revival, the compositional background of Marvin Hamlisch in popular music, and the team of arrangers, the score also includes jazz, rock, and other pop elements, in addition to songs that harken back to earlier Broadway tunes. While not as overtly in a rock style as shows like the previously discussed *Hair* or *Jesus Christ Superstar*, the score for

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<sup>7</sup> Larry Wilcox was fired by Marvin Hamlisch early in the show's development. Steven Suskin, *The Sound of Broadway Music: A Book of Orchestrators and Orchestrations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 362.

<sup>8</sup> Suskin, *The Sound of Broadway Music*, 362-363.

<sup>9</sup> Please see Appendix G for the individual numbers attributed to each orchestrator.

this production includes the aforementioned guitars and drum kit, though rock instruments take more of a background role to the vocals and action. A possible reason for a more conservative rock approach is to maintain the atmosphere of an actual audition for several of the numbers, where the music is suggested as being supplied by a rehearsal pianist.

### **The Plot and Characters**

The characters present in *A Chorus Line* include Zach, the director of the show, who is harried and stressed. This is not only due to trying to finish the casting of his upcoming show, but also because of his relationships with some of the potential dancers. Though Zach does appear onstage periodically, much of his dialogue is provided over the sound **system**, as if he were sitting in the house and watching the dancers from a distance. His assistant, Larry, also makes appearances throughout the show, occasionally to lead the dance combinations.

A number of additional dancers who are cut make appearances at the onset of the show to imply an audition in-progress, but the central core of dancers numbers seventeen, including the aforementioned Cassie. The make-up of this group includes several minorities, such as Connie, a petite Asian-American, and Paul and Diana, who are Puerto-Rican, as well as Richie, a young black man. Other characters are openly gay or are in the process of discovering their sexual identities, including Paul and Greg. Some characters come from broken homes or hard times, such as Sheila, Mark, and Maggie. Others openly admit to body-image issues, such as Judy, Val, and Bebe. Others are more well-adjusted, including Al, Kristine, Bobby, Don, and Mike.

Because of the nature of creating a chorus, which is an ensemble meant to act as a support for featured players in a musical, several songs in the show are performed as a unit. This includes the bulk of the opening number, where the characters are learning various combinations in different

dance styles. Also included is “One” and its reprise, the song designed to be the showstopper in the production at the culmination of auditions, where the dancers will become an anonymous background unit for a new star.

### **The Score: Group Scenes**

Many of the finer points of the storytelling occur during songs, overlapping with spoken statements made by characters that express either anguish about the audition itself or explain more of their personal stories. Lines such as, “I really need this job,” or wondering what the director is scouting for or wants for the upcoming show, serve as a constant reminder of the framing device of the try-out amidst the biographical vignettes.

More dovetailing statements occur during a series of montages that appear toward the middle of the production, which detail the characters experiencing puberty and assorted growing pains. The performers come together on iterations of “Goodbye Twelve...” and continue to list increasing ages between their stories. Several characters are then featured individually during these scenes. First, Connie describes being an extremely short dancer, and how that has affected her career, causing her to be cast as a teenager in her 30s. Then, several of the male characters describe experiencing unwanted public erections, among other embarrassing moments. These stories are presented in both dialogue and song. The constant push and pull between the chorus and the individual and the sung and the unsung not only causes the audience to have to pay close attention in order not to miss any details of importance, but also harkens back to the central point of the show, that despite each person’s differences, the end result is that they will be performing together.

To set the tone for the tension of the audition at the onset of the show, the characters participate in a number entitled “I Hope I Get It,” introducing themselves through short vocal

interjections. This number similarly previews the overarching energy in the show: quick, *forte*, and brassy.<sup>10</sup> The opening motive, first heard in the piano, sounds multiple times over the course of the song in differing styles of music. The repetition allows for the audience to have a musical point of reference while also reinforcing the wide array of styles the dancers are responsible for performing.

Before the audience has a chance to become too familiar with the characters, the auditions progress, with Zach and Larry calling out dancers by name and listing choreographed combinations. The dancers move about the stage, progressing through ballet and jazz sequences, and frequently changing positions. If the chaotic and fast-paced nature of the audition process was something unfamiliar to the audience before the show began, the production establishes those elements immediately.

The director admits at the start of the show that he is looking for eight strong female and male dancers, four of each. “I Hope I Get It,” then, serves as a bookend with “One” for the show. They are both scenes in which a large number of characters are present, require dancing, and are the beginning and end of the audition process. The whittling down of dancers suggests to the viewers the harsh reality of landing a job in entertainment: there are more people than there are employment opportunities.

“I Hope I Get It” serves to begin individualizing the dancers after they are seen receiving numbers. Though they participate in the combinations in groups and each has a turn to sing such lines as, “How many dancers does he need?,” they break away from the pack one at a time and

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<sup>10</sup> Marvin Hamlisch, *A Chorus Line*, Sony Music Entertainment ST 65282, 1998. CD. Hereafter referred to by the abbreviation “OR” for “Original Recording.” The first iteration of the main theme appears played by the piano, OR Track 1, 0:03, and then is restated by the full orchestra at 0:32 and by the brasses and saxophones at 0:48.



assert their physical independence from one another. The scoring for these moments also breaks away from the previously mentioned brassy fanfare, and changes to fit the dramatic needs of the singer in question. When the dancers begin to lament how badly they need to be hired, the music switches to piano and high strings, playing a series of scalar patterns and arpeggios.<sup>11</sup> This deviation from the disjunct fanfare serves to show a moment of inner desperate reflection for the dancers, who admit to being no better than athletes when considering of the time frame of their careers.<sup>12</sup>

When the cast auditions on a ballet combination, the instrumentation changes again.<sup>13</sup> At this point, the high orchestral strings play sustained notes and the flutes provide short interjections, not unlike music one would hear during a classical ballet production, such as during a waltz from *Swan Lake*.<sup>14</sup> Once all groups have performed the choreography, the music immediately reverts back to the brass setting of the theme with additional saxophones, before segueing into the final portion of the number, during which the accompanying music changes to synthesizer and low brass. This occurs under Paul's singing "Who am I anyway?," in which the synthesizer's music sounds like bell tones. This change in timbre and mood serves a dual purpose. It marks a sense of anxiety that some of the dancers feel at what is likely their last shot with low, somber accompaniment in the brassy, and introduces Paul's despair in particular. Paul later recounts one of the more wrenching backstories, involving being discovered by his parents dancing in drag, and he is also the one dancer to suffer an injury during the audition, suggesting a possible end to his

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<sup>11</sup> OR, Track 1, 1:16.

<sup>12</sup> Marvin Hamlisch et al., *A Chorus Line* (libretto) (New York: Applause, 1995), 133. Edward Kleban was the lyricist for the production.

<sup>13</sup> *A Chorus Line* (Original Cast), Theatre on Film and Tape Archive, The New York Library for the Performing Arts, viewed June 27, 2015. The viewed performance has the beginning portion of the ballet section played entirely on piano, differing from the commercial recording.

<sup>14</sup> OR, Track 1, 1:34.

career, and causing the others to reflect on their lives. Thus, his particular separation from the rest of the pack helps to suggest his future importance to the plot.

### **The Score: Female Characters**

During the course of the show, Zach reminds the group that he is looking for an ensemble of eight chorus members total: four boys and four girls. This causes additional stress among the dancers, several of whom attempt to behave in a way that makes them more memorable. The character of Sheila comes across as aggressive from the very first scene. When relegated to the back of the group to perform a combination, she promptly forgets a step. When Zach asks what happened, she replies, “I knew it when I was in the front.” Many of Sheila’s lines of dialogue are interjections that make some sarcastic commentary on the action at hand, including, “Well, you got what you paid for,” in reference to Val’s story that involves breast augmentation. Sheila also acknowledges that she changed her name when she entered the industry because she hated her birth name of Sara Rosemary.

When Zach asks Sheila to step forward to provide her story, a dialogue between the characters takes place for quite a while without any music. On her way to the front of the stage, bass drum and rim shots accompany her footsteps, signaling both her sex appeal and her aggressive behavior. The following dialogue, in which she twists Zach’s wording into more suggestive meanings, capitalizes on the musical characterization. Zach then asks Sheila to stop being so forward and be honest about her life, and after several additional requests from Zach, including asking her to literally let her hair down, she begins to describe her home life. This explanation continues without underscoring until she mentions the film *The Red Shoes*. A short, momentary flute countermelody sounds, suggesting a softer, more feminine side to the character, which later

returns with clarinet as she describes inspiration in seeing the ballet film. All accompaniment stops when she is asked to discuss her parents.<sup>15</sup>

In “At the Ballet,” Sheila describes attending the ballet as one of the few times in life where she has felt truly beautiful; she is from a broken home and her mother’s prior dancing ambitions had been projected onto her. The sudden silence that precedes the song conveys not only that Sheila does not expect to be asked about her parents, but that they are a subject she normally sidesteps. Despite the soft melodies heard with the clarinet and flute just moments before, the song begins aggressively in detailing Sheila’s home life; it is only when she mentions the ballet specifically that the music becomes reminiscent of such productions.

The opening to “At the Ballet” includes roiling, scalar *ostinati* in the low strings and piano, which does not immediately conjure visions of a ballet. Rather, Sheila opens the song with a glimpse into her parents’ lives, and the minor *ostinati* in the bass register reinforces that it will be an unpleasant topic. She states that her father asked her mother to marry him by telling her she would never do any better, and that he continued through their marriage by being unkind to both mother and daughter. Sheila’s mother later found a pair of earrings in her father’s car, confirming that he was unfaithful as well. Sheila then found a niche in ballet productions and dance classes, admitting “it wasn’t paradise, but it was home.”

Certain phrases are emphasized over the course of the song, and when Sheila is singing, it is “and though she was twenty-two,” in reference to her mother’s age when marrying her father. Similarly to punctuated phrases in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, the first word to occur on a downbeat—in Sheila’s case, “though”—is reinforced with a hard strike on the drum set, and no other

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<sup>15</sup> *A Chorus Line* (Original Cast), Theatre on Film and Tape Archive, The New York Library for the Performing Arts, viewed June 27, 2015. These musical moments do not occur on the commercial recording.

accompaniment sounds for the duration of the statement. This only occurs one other time during the song, in conjunction with the character Bebe, with emphasis on the same word, though with the complete phrase, “and though I was eight or nine.”

Sheila’s apparent anger melts away when she mentions attending the ballet. The mode changes into major, and the accompanying instruments change as well. Rather than synthesizer and brasses, the instrumentation switches to a more traditional orchestral sound. Featured are the high woodwinds (flute, oboe, and clarinet) and harp.<sup>16</sup> The change impacts this portion of the narrative in two ways. First, it sounds more like the musical backdrop of a ballet production, much like in the opening number, than rock instrumentation would. Second, the delicate nature of the sound and the change in mode immediately suggest that the memory of the ballet was indeed a happy one for the character.

Sheila is later joined in singing “At the Ballet” by Bebe and Maggie, who similarly have found solace in attending ballet productions and dance classes to escape from their reality. Bebe feels she has never grown into her looks, told by her mother she would be “different” rather than “pretty,” and that ballet allowed her to feel otherwise. It is implied through Bebe’s words that her looks have cost her jobs and more.

Maggie expresses her need for a “rich fantasy life” because of her parents’ unhappy marriage, which dancing could provide. She states that she was conceived as an attempt to keep their relationship intact, but it failed regardless. She imagines her father, who is alluded to be

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<sup>16</sup> OR, Track 3, 0:53. Oboe was not listed as an instrument of the pit in either Suskin’s *The Sound of Broadway Music* or in the show’s program, but is heard on the soundtrack.

absent from her life, as an Indian chief who asks her to dance. As dancing with her father is a large component of her fantasies, dancing in real life is necessary to her survival.

While the number is primarily a slower ballad, allowing for emphasis on their stories, “At the Ballet” does include several moments of faster-paced music, including rim shots to punctuate certain phrases as mentioned above, and frequent changes in tempo as the trio sings about taking lessons. As previously noted, Sheila throughout the musical demonstrates some abrasiveness in her dialogue and behavior, and this number not only provides her backstory, but also softens her personality for the audience, showing her edginess to be a disguise. The harshness of tone during the verses suggest that each of these women have been hardened by their pasts, but at the first mention of the ballet, along with the change in mode and instrumentation, serves to demonstrate their inner softness.

The character of Maggie sings a passage in the song that was originally meant for the character of Cassie, though both characters draw slightly from dancer Donna McKechnie’s biography, who sang the song during early workshops.<sup>17</sup> When the character of Maggie was created, some material, including an explanation of her father behaving like an Indian chief and asking her to dance, was developed. This additional theme does not borrow directly from the “Ballet” theme, like Bebe and Sheila, but is new material.

Diana Morales’s number, “Nothing,” focuses on her time in performing arts school, where she had hoped to become an actress. Her teacher, Mr. Karp, had been unkind regarding her abilities during her time there, and over the course of the song she unpacks the exercises she was meant to perform under his supervision. The tempo of the song, a brisk allegro, immediately implies her

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<sup>17</sup> Robert Viagas, et al., *On the Line: The Creation of A Chorus Line*, (New York: William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1990), pgs. 166-167.

initial excitement at the prospect of attending the school. For approximately the first thirty seconds of the song, over a piano *ostinato* in major, Morales describes her first day of class and the students being instructed to, as a team, create a human bobsled.<sup>18</sup> The high register of the piano sounds under her spoken words, youthful and delicate as she expresses her attempt to complete the exercise.

However, Morales continues explaining that Karp repeatedly singled her out for her seeming inability to emote. Moving forward, the song as a whole is strophic, repeating three larger consecutive sections of music three times, with the only commonality between the sections a pulsing rhythm in the drums. The persistent rhythm both propels the song forward and gives an indication of Morales's character as Puerto Rican.

The first section of the tripartite structure serves as narration for the events in Morales's story. The first two iterations deal with directions she receives in class, and the last describes her going to church and praying for guidance, all over the piano *ostinato* introduced at the onset of the number. For all three instances of this music, Hamlich punctuated the ends of Morales's vocals with stingers. In the first, her line, "feel the motion," ends with a chord supplied by muted trumpets and flute, an unexpected timbre amidst the more forceful quality of the *ostinato*.<sup>19</sup> During the second verse, she lists various inanimate objects she had to embody. While the trumpet and flute stingers continue, dovetailing in this instance, the high hat on the drum set enters, in particular marking the end of the word "sports car."<sup>20</sup> The additional instruments and the fact that they no longer play in tandem, but rather in opposition, suggests the increasing conflict in Morales's

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<sup>18</sup> OR, Track 8, 0:00-0:30.

<sup>19</sup> OR, Track 8, 00:34.

<sup>20</sup> OR, Track 8, 1:55.

emotions and in her dealings with Karp. The third iteration of this music reflects her prayers to Santa Maria, featuring synthesized church bells.<sup>21</sup>

The second larger section of music finds Morales explaining that she “dug right down to the bottom of (her) soul” to find inspiration to perform Karp’s exercises. These sections similarly occur over the piano *ostinato*. Despite the multitude of instrumental voices throughout, the constant presence of the piano serves two purposes. First, it creates a connection to “At the Ballet,” which similarly includes a piano *ostinato* throughout. Second, the piano’s role as part of the rhythm section in popular songs is reflected here.

The first of the sections discussing the classroom exercises features high winds playing a four-note *ostinato* of their own for several bars in a major mode.<sup>22</sup> The nature of this music makes it seem hopeful that Morales may yet find her way. The second time this music sounds, the flute has a persistent trill in its high register, causing some dissonance against both the piano and the vocals. Here, the character begins to break down in spirit a bit.<sup>23</sup> The third time, the full complement of winds and brass play an ascending scalar pattern that also increases in dynamic before segueing into the next section.<sup>24</sup> Here, the building tension in the music supports Morales’s nearly reaching the end of her patience.

The third musical section focuses on the word “nothing,” harkening to the title of the song. Each time one hears this music, Morales explains that she has no feelings toward what she had been detailing in the previous two sections of music: the first day’s exercise, continuing activities and being called upon, and the class as a whole. While the accompaniment for these moments of

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<sup>21</sup> OR, Track 8, 2:53.

<sup>22</sup> OR, Track 8, 00:52.

<sup>23</sup> OR, Track 8, 2:10.

<sup>24</sup> OR, Track 8, 3:13.

the song is remarkably similar, featuring the high brass and winds playing *ostinati* in major modes, the second time it occurs, Morales mentions that she is “hopeless.” When she sings this word, the trombones play a descending line in minor.<sup>25</sup> This change in tone reinforces the despair that the character feels at the hands of her instructor.

The forward motion of the music in “Nothing” only halts twice. Before the third appearances of the main sections of music, she states that Karp tells her that she will “never be an actress.” When she says, rather than sings, this, all accompaniment drops out entirely. This lack of musical support both emphasizes the importance of that statement to Diana’s background, but also implies her feelings. All other action comes to a grinding and abrupt halt, shocking both the character and the audience. The second time the *ostinato* patterns cease, in a tag at the end of the song, it does not feature absolute silence. Rather, the winds and brasses play sustained major chords.<sup>26</sup> This tag features portions of the vocal melodies from all three sections of the song, and Morales describes learning her teacher had died and that she continued to feel “nothing.”

Deviating from group and solo numbers, the husband and wife team of Kristine and Al, who both desperately need to be employed, share a duet that shows how well they complement one another. She is a poor singer, and he is a stronger singer than dancer. Their number, reminiscent of earlier musical theater pieces in its humorous tone, has little in the way of actual accompaniment. The emphasis is on their voices, with Kristine “singing” stridently off-key and Al finishing the phrases on pitch. Throughout, the harp and reeds play arpeggiated patterns, suggesting a bouncy, playful character. This approach only changes when Kristine cops to being

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<sup>25</sup> OR, Track 8, 2:23.

<sup>26</sup> OR, Track 8, 3:47.



a strong dancer, and the full orchestra plays a forte chord on the word “power.”<sup>27</sup> The change in timbre and volume here suggests that she is indeed a strong mover.

Cassie has perhaps the most outwardly striking music, and performs the longest solo number of all the characters, though the majority of her song is choreographed. As the dancer who has returned from her solo career with virtually no success, she tries to audition for the ensemble, with Zach continuously remarking that her talents are too strong for chorus. Her previous relationship with the director (mirroring the one between Bennett and Donna McKechnie, the dancer who portrayed Cassie) causes extra friction during the audition process. However, desperate for another chance, Cassie proceeds to audition, and her number, rather than being reflective, consists of pleading for a chance. Because of her approach, the musical styles, which range from jazz to funk to Latin, are mostly *forte*, and requires more pit presence, especially with brass and percussion, which punctuates choreographical combinations.<sup>28</sup>

In “The Music and the Mirror,” there is a long orchestral interlude, during which Cassie dances in a variety of styles to prove her range. This requires the use of all members of the pit in some capacity, and features the most heavily rock-inspired music of the entire score. However, the number opens with very simple accompaniment, with the guitar playing constant quarter notes in common time, and the piano joining on the off-beats, in a middle register, and consonant.<sup>29</sup> At this point, Cassie begins to suggest her desire for any chance to use her skills, and the accompaniment

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<sup>27</sup> OR, Track 4, 0:56.

<sup>28</sup> Premiering in the same year, the presence of funk in “The Music and the Mirror” create a bond between *A Chorus Line* and *The Wiz*.

<sup>29</sup> OR, Track 10, opening.

is calm and collected, just as she initially appears to be. The first interruption to this pulse comes as she sings, “give me somewhere exciting to go,” which features a *glissando* in the harp.<sup>30</sup>

Almost immediately, her pleading becomes more insistent, asking Zach to “use me” and “give me somebody to dance with.” With each new statement, another instrument in the pit makes an appearance; with the first, muted brass, and with the second, a descending *glissando* in the flute.<sup>31</sup> The muted brass gives her vocal lines some additional support, and perhaps some additional appearance of confidence, while the descending flute line could suggest a momentary lapse of hope.

Though Cassie’s number picks up in tempo and adds in winds and brasses, the music does come to a stop abruptly to highlight one of her lyrics. When she first sings “give me the chance to fit in,” all accompaniment ceases.<sup>32</sup> There is some irony in this treatment, as the singer no longer fits in with the rest of the music; however, the fact that Cassie returns to the chorus and is willing to join, is important to the story arch, and this is reinforced here. Silence helps emphasize several other points in the song as well, such as when Cassie sings “to dance” for the first time, as well as “give me a chance to come through.”<sup>33</sup> The instrumental silence surrounding the word “dance” on its first hearing reinforces the art’s importance to the character.

The dance break that Cassie performs lasts for several minutes, during which the instruments of the pit are all featured in some manner, varying the musical styles to which she performs. When her vocals first stop, the winds and brasses play eighth notes on repeated pitches,

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<sup>30</sup> OR, Track 10, 0:27.

<sup>31</sup> OR, Track 10, 0:41 and 0:52.

<sup>32</sup> OR, Track 10, 0:52.

<sup>33</sup> OR, Track 10, 1:25 and 3:15.

beginning to propel the momentum of the music forward.<sup>34</sup> The next change in style moves into jazz, first featuring piano, synthesizer, and drum set, before the saxophones enter. When the saxophone first enters, the instrument plays scales, some of them chromatic, before segueing immediately into a countermelody against the piano.<sup>35</sup>

In the most rock-infused musical moment of the show, Cassie dances against a guitar riff for about a full minute of her dance break. A complete departure from the traditional jazz sound of the previous section, the guitar, over *ostinati* in the drum set, plays a series of riffs that sound improvisatory. To add to the change in tone, the guitar employs a pedal to manipulate a number of the pitches, harkening back to the psychedelic rock heard earlier in a production like *Hair*.<sup>36</sup> The drastic change in style further reinforces Cassie's range. Earlier in the audition, with the rest of the group, she demonstrates her ballet and theatrical abilities, and at this point in the show capitalizes on dance styles she had not been asked to perform, further showing how well-rounded she is as a dancer.

The tempo of "The Music and the Mirror" increases as it moves into the climax of the song. The pacing suggests that not only is the song propelling toward its apex, but Cassie's increasing desperation. While the trumpets play a melody heard earlier in the song as the character sings "the chance to dance for you" several times, all the other instruments of the pit enter in phases. The lower-pitched saxophones and brasses play sustained notes, increasing in volume and tension, while the alto saxophone supplies a countermelody against the trumpet, and the upper woodwinds provide short bursts and runs.<sup>37</sup> The very last section of music heard in this number involves all

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<sup>34</sup> OR, Track 10, 3:38.

<sup>35</sup> OR, Track 10, 3:48-4:36.

<sup>36</sup> OR, Track 10, 4:37.

<sup>37</sup> OR, Track 10, 5:20.

the instruments playing the melody along with the trumpet, before playing a short coda. The gradual increase in dynamics and speed, coupled with the chaotic nature of the layered instrumental lines further reinforce the idea of Cassie's desperation. While she asks Zach early in the show to treat her as he would the other dancers, she knows of what he is capable.

As the number builds in intensity while the dance break continues, the electric guitar gradually enters. Reaching the last section of dance music, the tone changes more toward funk with heavy guitar and synthesizer juxtaposed against brasses and saxophones.<sup>38</sup> This musical moment is poignant for two reasons. First, as funk is a style associated with black performers and dancers, Cassie is demonstrating that her range likely exceeds that of many of the other potential hires. Second, while earlier portions of the dance break suggest ballet and jazz, allowing for a moment of contemporary music brings the listener back into the then-present 1970s. "The Music and the Mirror" culminates with most instruments of the pit playing a variation on the vocal melody together, before breaking off into individual improvisatory lines, referencing earlier portions of the number.

One of the more humorous numbers is "Dance Ten, Looks Three," which details the extremes a performer will go to in order to book work. The character of Val explains that she invested in altering her appearance to be taken more seriously as an auditionee compared with other, more buxom and beautiful dancers, stating that when she arrived in New York she was "flat as a pancake and ugly as sin." Her featured number, also referred to colloquially as "Tits and Ass," is comical on the surface. The number is fast-paced, makes a number of references to plastic surgery and where to get it in New York, and includes brasses to reinforce Val's unabashed

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<sup>38</sup> OR, Track 10, 5:40.

personality. The song also drives home the point that body-image can indeed be everything in an industry like Broadway, and while many people can laugh it off, its focus can be quite destructive. Val also engages in banter with her peers during her number, including Sheila, who mocks her choices.

Because Val is portrayed as a sexy character, the orchestrational choices for her number includes heavy use of saxophones and brasses with assorted mutes, playing riffs like they might in a jazz ensemble or for a Burlesque performance. Val also experiences a moment of ballet-like music during the final iteration of the chorus, departing just momentarily from her brazen personality. This break serves as comic, and, remembering that a dance audition is continuing to happen, a chance to show her own range, compared with her competitors.

### **The Score: The Men**

The male dancers similarly have individual numbers, but they are less common than those for the women. Primarily, the men are featured within the group numbers, having a few lines to themselves and mostly telling their stories during unaccompanied moments. The character of Al, as previously mentioned, shares his number with his wife, Kristine, as they come together as a pair. Otherwise, the most prominently featured male character is Mike.

The nature of auditions is displayed through Mike's song, "I Can Do That." Eager to prove himself worthy of being cast, Mike alludes to striving to be a renowned tap dancer after following in his older sister's footsteps. This youthful exuberance is a constant feature in this number. It opens with reeds (clarinet and bass clarinet) supplying a short introduction before the bass and reeds begin playing a walking pattern.<sup>39</sup> The taps on Mike's shoes are an integral percussive aspect

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<sup>39</sup> Track 2, 0:05.

of the music, supplying short riffs after he states the song's title in the lyrics. The overall musical quality pays homage to both New Orleans jazz and swing, styles both associated with tap dancing, with a lot of emphasis on clarinet; while apt for this number, this treatment serves more so to set Mike apart from other auditionees. Other characters have jazz elements in their individual numbers; however, it is the primary style to accompany Mike.

Several stories are strung together in a series of montages. These snapshots of the characters allow the audience just enough information to understand their backgrounds, but not become overly invested in them. These are three montages. While they also feature the female characters, the men have a few moments of prominence. Most notably is Richie, the sole black character of the cast, who details his athletic ability. His skill allowed him entrance to college, where he trained as a teacher before switching his career to dance. Though a very short portion of music, the fast pacing and heavy presence of drums allows the audience to understand Richie's level of energy and his role as the sole black performer.<sup>40</sup>

Several characters acknowledge their curiosity or experimentation with sex and related topics. Marc, whose story is told not as part of a song, but as interjections between songs, details his fright at a potential diagnosis of gonorrhea. As he begins to speak, he is accompanied by a piano and clarinet countermelody in the middle ranges of both instruments. As he describes finding a textbook to look up information on diseases, the two accompanying instruments move up by an octave. This change in register adds a level of tension and discomfort, supporting Marc's tone during his admission.

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<sup>40</sup> OR, Track 7, 2:14.

One of the most prominent monologues involves little music until its conclusion. Paul, asked to remain on stage while the other dancers were dismissed, had been avoiding revealing his story during most of the audition process. Zach admits he likes Paul's dancing and asks him to try to tell his tale without the pressure of additional listeners. Paul does, detailing his struggles with his sexuality and finding a job, eventually gaining a role in a drag show. Having kept his job a secret from his parents, Paul is mortified when they arrive early with his belongings before he leaves on tour and sees him in drag. Though they ask another member of the company to take care of their son, and Paul knows that is a sign of their love, his suspicion of their disappointment drives him to tears. While Zach returns to the stage to comfort Paul, the melody from the opening number associated with the line "I really need this job" returns, first on solo piano, then joined by an iteration on oboe and arpeggios played by bells. The reappearance of this melody strongly suggests Paul's desperation, and the inclusion of the oboe adds an additional layer of sorrow. It is also a direct quotation from the earlier number, "Who am I anyway?"

In the number "What I Did For Love," the dancers who remain in the audition space after Paul's injury sing a ballad detailing their sacrifices to accomplish their goals. The fact that it is the slowest in tempo of all the songs and accompanied by strings is significant for several reasons. Even though a few earlier songs were at a moderate speed, some element of the accompaniment was constantly moving with rapid note patterns, suggesting some buildup of energy for the character. This is evident in a number such as "At the Ballet," where under Sheila and Bebe's narration, the low winds and piano play moving eighth notes. The dancers must maintain their energy and stamina in order to book jobs, and up until this point they have.

"What I Did For Love" immediately precedes the final round of cuts in the audition process. Zach asks the dancers what they will do when they can no longer dance. Beginning with Diana

alone, the other performers join in and relay that they “can’t forget, won’t regret” what they “did for love.” This moment in the show is significant for an array of reasons. For the plot, it signals coming to the end of both the show and of the grueling audition process. For the characters, the song details that, despite laying themselves bare during the day and potentially not getting the job in the end, that dance itself is most important to them. Musically, this is the most traditionally orchestral number of the show, relying on piano, flute, oboe, strings, brasses, and mallet percussion for musical support at various points during the number.<sup>41</sup>

The song that deviates the most from any sort of rock influence is “One,” where the selected chorus members perform a number from the show for which they were auditioning. Instead of an overtly ‘70s, rock-fueled song, it is instead reminiscent of the big, show-stopping, Busby Berkley-esque numbers of the 1930s. This is achieved in part by focus on a big brass sound and tightly-knit harmonic vocal lines. Because the chorus is now being formed, no one vocalist sings a solo; they are all equals. This is achieved in part because the instruments of the pit are similarly working as an ensemble rather than constantly playing individual lines, reflecting the roles of the dancers themselves.

The importance of “One” is stressed because the cast sings it twice in the latter portion of the show. The candidates perform it once altogether as part of the audition, and then the song sounds a second time as though the show has finally been cast as the very last element the audience sees at the end of the show. In keeping with the show’s framing device, the viewers are left with the reminder that the dancers inevitably are stripped of their individualities to become members of the supporting chorus for the new production.

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<sup>41</sup> OR, Track 12.



## **Conclusion**

*A Chorus Line* was revolutionary in many ways. The building of the script and musical numbers from the biographies of several living people was unusual. The audience was given a glimpse backstage and acknowledged the aspects of show business that are significantly less glamorous; other musicals have capitalized on this basic idea, but *A Chorus Line*'s focus on the audition process was unique. However, the score alone has come to have a great impact on pop culture.

The songs have been used in other media for a variety of purposes. The songs appearing in television and film relies on at least some of the audience recognizing the music and others understanding their origin. "What I Did For Love" has been recorded by such popular artists as Aretha Franklin and Petula Clark, bringing the song to a wider public like recorded versions of "Age of Aquarius" had done for *Hair*. Television shows such as *The Simpsons*, *House M.D.*, and *Scrubs* have performed parodied versions of the production number "One." More recently, the opening number to the show was parodied in 2014's *Muppets Most Wanted*.

At the time of its closing in 1990, after fifteen years, *A Chorus Line* held the record for being Broadway's longest-running show. Broadway composer Cy Coleman stated: "It created a new road. That road was realism, a kind of realism that we had not seen before in the musical theater. People were describing their emotions. That was the revelation."<sup>42</sup>

The orchestrations for *A Chorus Line* further helped the audience to emotionally connect with the characters. Because some dancers had featured numbers with a varied instrumental palette

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<sup>42</sup> Mervyn Rothstein, "After 15 Years (15!), 'A Chorus Line' Ends," *The New York Times*, April 30, 1990.

in juxtaposition to others who did not allowed viewers to gain different levels of insight with each auditionee. The involvement of a group of arrangers treating a variety of personality types gave additional depth to the music, as no one person was responsible for creating musical divisions between characters, another element that sets *A Chorus Line* apart from the other shows included in this study.

## **Chapter 8: *The Wiz***

“Bit by bit, the Broadway musical theater, which has tended to live in a world of its own, has been coping with contemporary musical forms. In ‘Hair,’ ‘Jesus Christ Superstar,’ and the still-running ‘Grease,’ the theater dealt with various aspects of rock...But with ‘The Wiz,’ a black version of ‘The Wizard of Oz,’ the Broadway musical has jumped feet first into soul music and with sufficient success to capture seven Tony Awards, including Best Score.” –John S. Wilson<sup>1</sup>

When L. Frank Baum’s novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* was first published in 1900, its immediate popularity led to the creation of an entire series of books concerning the exotic locale and characters, as well as a number of other promotional products, films, and theatrical depictions.<sup>2</sup> Following the success of the 1939 MGM musical screen version and its accompanying stage production, even more versions of the tale appeared, adapting other Oz stories or presenting parodic iterations in a variety of media. Charlie Smalls, William F. Brown, and Harold Wheeler’s vision, *The Wiz* stripped the story of its understood Caucasian connotations and instead adapted the story for an African-American company with an emphasis on contemporary musical styles of the mid-1970s, including soul and funk.

*The Wiz*, then, examined the source material in a novel way. In a decade in which Motown music, Blaxploitation films (including 1972’s *Blacula*), and re-appropriating material for black casts were all popular, *The Wiz* took Baum’s original story and modified the plot and characters only slightly. This occurred in order to incorporate dialogue suited to an African-American cast

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<sup>1</sup> John S. Wilson, “The Wiz Is Not a Subtle Soul,” *The New York Times*, June 1, 1975.

<sup>2</sup> The original run of *The Wizard of Oz* musical netted Baum what would be equivalent to about \$2 million, and the show toured for about nine years during its initial run. Rebecca Loncraine, *The Real Wizard of Oz* (New York: Gotham Books, 2009), 194 and 244.

and music associated more with black performers. While no specific reason for choosing to adapt the story in this manner has been given outright in any research or archival materials, interviews allude to providing a vehicle for known or upcoming black performers, and utilizing familiar characters and locales to give the audience something identifiable in a new format.

*The Wiz* departs from the other shows considered in this dissertation merely by virtue of being a completely fantastic tale. Though *Pippin* includes elements of fancy, it simultaneously has roots in reality and history. The setting of Oz, inclusion of witches and tin men and Munchkins, and methods of transportation via cyclone and silver slippers are all drastically different from the other shows included in this project. Because of this, the application of rock music in this musical is useful for study in a new way: rock styles in *The Wiz* serve to dually familiarize and exoticize the characters. For the purposes of this chapter, further points for consideration will include discussion of individual characters, consideration and description of dance scenes and traveling music, referring to music accompanying both the tornado and the Yellow Brick Road.

Despite the accessible songs composed by Harold Arlen and E.Y. Harburg for the 1939 MGM production, the new vision for the story brought the tale closer to 1975 for the audience and took into account the intended race of the performers by drawing on parallels to famous musicians of the day. While this approach in essence is not dissimilar to the approaches taken for other shows, the direct population of musicians under consideration is much different, looking to Motown, blues, and soul more closely for direct inspiration than other shows examined here.

The orchestra for the show mainly features electric guitars, basses, and drum set, but also standard winds (flute, oboe, clarinet), brasses (trumpet, horn, trombone), and orchestral strings. To capture the funk flavor, several compositional devices recur, such as heavy emphasis on the bass

line and percussion. Throughout the show, the primary sound production comes from the electric instruments, with the orchestral instruments appearing mostly in songs that involve reminiscing.

### **The Backdrop**

The precedents for staging a production with an all-black ensemble in the middle of the twentieth century mainly lay in either casting an existing production with black actors—such as *Hello Dolly!* (1967) with Pearl Bailey as Dolly Levi and Mabel King (who would later appear in *The Wiz* as Evilene) as Ernestina—or creating a show whose characters and plot are intended specifically for African-American actors.<sup>3</sup> *The Wiz* combined the two previous methods. The plot and characters were pre-existent and known to audiences, while the music was newly composed. Scholar Elizabeth Wollman suggests this show is one of several productions staged in the early 1970s — along with *Purlie* and *Raisin* — that were intended to encourage a higher number of African-American theatergoers:

The efforts to court a black audience for the theater gained enough momentum that by the late 1960s, innovations on the part of black theater companies Off Broadway had begun to exert influence on the Broadway realm. By 1970, black musicals began to proliferate on Broadway with a strength that had not been seen since the golden age of the black musical in the 1920s. Because black audiences were only just beginning to return to Broadway theaters, however, the most successful black musicals appealed to whites and blacks alike, with upbeat plots, lots of jokes, and catchy music carefully diluting any polemics.<sup>4</sup>

Taking into consideration the known source material, combined with the casting of black actors, *The Wiz* did appeal to a wide enough audience to enjoy a successful run of 1,672

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<sup>3</sup> “Pearl Bailey,” *The Internet Broadway Database*, <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-cast-staff/pearl-bailey-30650>, accessed April 2, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Wollman, *The Theater Will Rock: A History of the Rock Musical from Hair to Hedwig* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 111.

performances, with a number of Tony nominations and wins.<sup>5</sup> Potential subliminal meanings in taking such a well-known story and putting it in a racially-aware context were not lost on audiences or reviewers, either. They read the interpretation as one that was aware of white dominance in the theater, as well as a reaction to the fallout of the Civil Rights movement.<sup>6</sup> Putting African-Americans into a well-recognized mold demonstrated a certain level of equality for the actors and creative teams alongside their peers.

Charlie Smalls (1943-1987), the composer and lyricist for *The Wiz*, studied at Juilliard before becoming a pianist with the New York Jazz Repertory Company and later touring with acts such as Harry Belafonte.<sup>7</sup> William F. Brown's (b. 1928) contribution to the show was no small feat as he was one of the few Caucasians involved in the production. A surprising choice to write a libretto steeped in slang and dialogue best suited to African-American characters, he crafted a book that was acknowledged by critics to be "humorous."

Together, the creative team adapted the notable characters, setting, and plot, and framed it with popular music, enlisting Harold Wheeler (b. 1943) as orchestrator.<sup>8</sup> Wheeler had worked in several theatrical capacities prior to his involvement in *The Wiz*, primarily as an arranger or contributor, including musical supervisor for Galt MacDermot's *Two Gentlemen of Verona*; however, *The Wiz* marked his first credit as the main orchestrator on a project.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *The Wiz* won in seven of the eight categories in which it was nominated for the Tony Awards. The wins included Best Musical, Best Score, Best Direction, Best Choreography, Best Costume designs, and individual wins for features players Ted Ross (Lion), and Dee Dee Bridgewater (Glinda).

<sup>6</sup> *The Wiz* (Original Cast), Theatre on Film and Tape Archive, The New York Library for the Performing Arts, viewed June 28, 2015. As a visual joke, Toto, who only appears in the first scene, who audiences expect to be a dark-colored dog like Terry the Cairn Terrier in the film, was white in the original version, an inversion of expectations.

<sup>7</sup> "Charlie Smalls is Dead; Composer of *The Wiz*," *The New York Times*, September 4, 1987.

<sup>8</sup> Harold Wheeler earlier contributed to additional orchestrations on *Promises, Promises*.

<sup>9</sup> "Harold Wheeler," *The Internet Broadway Database*, <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-cast-staff/harold-wheeler-12661>, accessed April 2, 2014.

Drawing more from the original novel's treatment than the MGM adaptation, *The Wiz* highlights many of the same dramatic moments through song.<sup>10</sup> Each of the four main characters (Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man, and Lion) has the opportunity to perform their own individual song, explaining their respective needs for completing the journey to the Emerald City. Dorothy wishes to return home, the Scarecrow desires a brain, the Tin Man a heart, and the Lion, courage. The individual witches also each sing a solo.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Story and Characters**

In *The Wiz*, as in the book, Dorothy is portrayed as a young and innocent girl from Kansas living on a farm, along with her Aunt Em and Uncle Henry. Her aunt and uncle dote on her, despite acknowledging that she is a bit wild. Following an unexpected tornado, she lands in Oz, where she is advised to seek out the Wizard in the Emerald City, and meets three traveling companions along the way, who lack the specific qualities mentioned previously. After receiving from the Wizard the task of defeating Evilene, a wicked witch, the four friends ultimately triumph, and Dorothy is given passage home. While she is still a young girl, she begins to show signs of maturity at the conclusion that she lacked in the first scene, including comforting her peers, decision-making skills, and following through on tasks. Her music in the show reflects these subtle shifts in her personal qualities.

Dorothy's three traveling companions—the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion—appear as slightly extroverted versions of the expected figures. When Dorothy first meets each character, they cover their individual flaws (lack of brain, heart, and courage, respectively)

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<sup>10</sup> *The Wiz* retains elements of the original story, such as Dorothy's silver slippers, which had been reworked as ruby in the MGM version to better employ the production staff's new capabilities with Technicolor.

<sup>11</sup> Glinda sings with the Munchkins in the 1939 film as an introduction to their numbers, but otherwise does not sing, and the Wicked Witch of the West has no song of her own.

with projected bravery. This approach is further highlighted through their music: as each character is introduced, their first song moves at a moderate-to-fast tempo, sounds in a major mode, and includes lyrics that suggest a positive outlook.

### **The Score: The Overture**

Though the curtain opens on a Midwestern farmland, the overture signals that the show will be a departure from anything remotely rooted in country music or resembling an homage to Harold Arlen's score for the 1939 film.<sup>12</sup> Much the same as *Hair* or *Pippin*, the first musical sound heard is a flourish on the synthesizer, placing the audience into an electronically-driven sound space. Keeping with traditional overtures, several of the show's songs sound in turn at this time, including "Where Am I Going?," "He's a Wiz," "Believe in Yourself," and "Ease on Down the Road."

During "Where Am I Going?," brass instruments play the melody, with the trumpet as the most prominent voice, suggesting a certain forcefulness or aggressiveness about this number that one does not hear later in the show. Rather, the number as sung by Dorothy during the show proper is a lighter ballad. However, the instrumentation introduced during this overture is important because the brasses appear during moments of heightened emotions and self-realization throughout the show.

Immediately after this quotation, the orchestra segues into "He's a Wiz," which functions like a jazz break, similar to the character of the number during the show. The instrumental voices introduced are the saxophone choir that plays the main melody together with points of harmony,

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<sup>12</sup> *The Wiz* (Original Cast), Theatre on Film and Tape Archive, The New York Library for the Performing Arts, viewed June 28, 2015. The overture is not available on the commercial soundtrack. On the recording, the overture consists of a few bars of "Ease on Down the Road," arguably the most memorable song from the production.



and the piano, which provides improvisatory runs. It is interesting to note that, during this portion of the overture, voices also enter, singing the lyrics “He’s a Wiz and he lives in Oz” several times. The inclusion of backup singers during the overture is integral, as many subsequent numbers in the show feature the chorus offering additional insight or harmonic support to solo numbers. This also reflects the technique of backup singers as accompaniment, first introduced in *Promises, Promises*.<sup>13</sup>

One of the production’s climactic numbers, “Believe in Yourself,” performed by the Good Witch Glinda, also appears in the overture, performed by the trumpet with the orchestral strings and winds underneath, playing sustained notes. At this point in the overture, the audience has heard brasses, jazz ensemble, and a collection of traditional instruments, all subsequently featured in the show, juxtaposed against rock ensemble. During the last section of the overture, which centers on the song “Ease on Down the Road,” the rock ensemble is included alongside the other instruments. While the saxophones play the main melody and the brasses play a countermelody, the electric guitar and synthesizer perform *ostinati* while the drum kit plays a series of patterns.<sup>14</sup> The fact that the overture begins and ends with electronically-based music also serves to imply how much of the score will be provided by such instruments and styles.

### **The Score: Dorothy and her Traveling Companions**

Dorothy’s role is largely as a conduit for the audience; coming from Kansas, she represents the real world and is thus modeled after prominent female singers. Her songs reflect a number of popular artists of the time in several genres. Musicians such as Odetta (“Nobody Knows You When

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<sup>13</sup> In the 2010 revival of *Promises, Promises*, during the overture, the newly inserted “I Say a Little Prayer for You” is treated in the same way as “He’s a Wiz” in this production. As Wheeler worked on the original production of *Promises, Promises*, it is possible this technique for *The Wiz* served as an inspiration for the later show.

You're Down and Out") and Aretha Franklin ("Until You Come Back to Me"), for example, known for performing in a variety of genres, including gospel and blues, and styles that borrowed elements from a variety of popular genres, can be perceived in Dorothy's music. The character's songs lie in a middle register, as does her accompanying music, and require her at times to belt. That is similarly reflected in her accompaniment with textural thickening and instrumental choices that symbolize and increase our perception of Dorothy's power. It also allows Dorothy to mature from a melodic child to a belting woman, paralleling well-known artists and their material, such as Aretha Franklin's "R.E.S.P.E.C.T."

Much in the same vein as Arlen and Harburg's "Over the Rainbow" had served in the 1939 film, several of Dorothy's songs describe her desires. While there is not a direct correlation between "Over the Rainbow" and a song in *The Wiz*—in the latter, the action moves directly from Dorothy's interactions with her aunt and uncle on their Kansas farm to the tornado sequence—Dorothy still sings two "I Want" songs over the course of the musical. The character's primary objective once she lands in Oz is to return home, reinforced in two prominent songs for the character.

"Soon as I Get Home" and a later number that reprises some of the same thematic material, "Home," performed as she returns to Kansas, are slower in tempo, cover a wide vocal range from below the treble clef to the top of the clef, and move quickly between major and minor modes, capitalizing on the mood of the lyrics at a given point. Wheeler highlights the differences in Dorothy's moods by slight changes in the instrumentation; these variances subliminally suggest the range of emotions she experiences.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See Ken Harper, *The Wiz*, Atlantic Recording Corporation 18137-2, 1975. CD. Hereafter abbreviated to "OR" for "Original Recording." Track 5.

“Soon as I Get Home” opens with clarinet and triangle, introducing not only the  $\frac{3}{4}$  time signature and waltz feel, but also the song’s characteristic light, high timbre.<sup>16</sup> While these accompanimental voices continue to play, high strings and flute gradually layer in to play countermelodies against the soloist. This is not unlike how other songs performed by female soloists in this study have been treated, with a thinner texture and higher instrumental voices. However, at approximately the midpoint of the song, the atmosphere changes and the instrumentation is replaced by drum set and piano, not unlike accompaniment for female R&B singers, and the meter shifts into 4/4 time.<sup>17</sup> The previously heard instruments remain; however, they function instead to highlight certain phrases rather than play independent lines. For example, when Dorothy suggests a fear of “different people around me,” the violins play a *tremolo*, an effect often aligned with danger or the unknown.<sup>18</sup>

As Dorothy continues to wonder about whether her impending journey through Oz will be frightening, the electric guitar enters. Much like the orchestral strings had done in the previous section, here the guitar plays countermelody. As she continues, the prominent instruments from the first section, including the orchestral strings and oboe, reenter, playing sustained notes.<sup>19</sup>

In “Home,” the ultimate number of the show, many of the instruments introduced in “Soon as I Get Home” reappear, including oboe, clarinet, flute, orchestral strings, and triangle. New to this number are harp and horn, which link the song to the one that precedes it, “If You Believe,” sung by Glinda. Since *The Wiz* concludes with Dorothy’s return to Kansas, the number opens with

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<sup>16</sup> OR, Track 5, 0:00.

<sup>17</sup> OR, Track 5, 1:41.

<sup>18</sup> OR, Track 5, 1:45. This technique of including *tremolos* to signify impending danger or fear has been a compositional staple for some time, seen in works such as Weber’s *Der Freischutz* and in scores to many films.

<sup>19</sup> OR, Track 5, 2:02.

synthesized bells and chimes, signifying that she has achieved her desire.<sup>20</sup> For most of the number, other than the drum set, the instrumentation is orchestral, reminding the audience that, while the show has included a number of popular-based tunes, it does have its roots in more traditional material. This could suggest to the audience the idea that home and attaining one's desires are best represented and associated with traditional music, while popular styles in *The Wiz* align most effectively with the fantastic and exotic.

Even Dorothy's song "Be a Lion," which encourages her friend to capitalize on the courage he possesses, functions much the same way as the previously discussed numbers. Here, as with several songs in the production, background singers perform almost immediately, singing an "ooh" syllable after a short introduction on the piano.<sup>21</sup> When Dorothy sings alone, her accompaniment echoes earlier material, resting primarily in violins and winds, which also serve as sound effects; for example, as she sings of "butterflies," the flute provides a short *glissando*.<sup>22</sup> The instrumentation varies only when the Lion joins in and asserts himself. Then the trumpets and trombones begin to enter, gradually layering with sustained pitches and increasing in volume.<sup>23</sup> The change in timbre and volume demonstrates that a switch in the Lion's attitude is taking place, and it ties the music to the Lion's solo number, "I'm a Mean Ole Lion," which employs a heavy use of trumpets and trombones.

When Dorothy first meets the Scarecrow, her initial Oz friend, he appears as a character with a sense of humor. He is quick-witted, despite not having a brain, and makes fun of himself just as easily as do the antagonistic crows found in his field. In place of "If I Only Had a Brain"

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<sup>20</sup> OR, Track 17, 0:00.

<sup>21</sup> OR, Track 10, 0:09.

<sup>22</sup> OR, Track 10, 0:33.

<sup>23</sup> OR, Track 10, 3:25.

from the MGM film, the Scarecrow's "I Was Born on the Day Before Yesterday" is heavily influenced by gospel, even including a back-up chorus when the crows line up behind him and sing in harmony, reminiscent of many soul and R&B singers of the time.

Rather than showing the Scarecrow to be hapless, with no particular ability to ward off field looters, he is shown to be an active, forward-thinking character. After Dorothy first wanders into his view, he asks her for money so he can buy a new brain, though she informs him that brains cannot be bought. During the song, he laments his short life and lack of experiences, but displays a positive attitude toward the future.<sup>24</sup>

The song begins with piano and synthesizer riffs, indicative of gospel.<sup>25</sup> The piano is the primary accompanying instrument throughout, though percussion and brass layer in gradually toward the climax. The percussion serves to highlight certain words or phrases, such as "I know I'm gonna make it this time." The brass come in little by little, again cementing the positive attitude the Scarecrow carries with him. While the opening of the number is at a piano volume and very relaxed, the end of the song is *forte* with a lot of activity from the instruments in the pit, including saxophones.<sup>26</sup> This change in volume and power helps to solidify the positivity the Scarecrow embodies. Much like pop songs, the number fades out on the recording, rather than ending with finality.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> In the 1978 film version of the show, the Scarecrow's song is replaced with "You Can't Win, You Can't Break Even," an up-tempo song written for Michael Jackson, who played the role.

<sup>25</sup> OR, Track 6.

<sup>26</sup> OR, Track 6, 2:54. The saxophones play the same figuration as the backup singers.

<sup>27</sup> *The Wiz* (Original Cast), Theatre on Film and Tape Archive, The New York Library for the Performing Arts, viewed June 28, 2015. The tempo provided on the commercial recording is much slower than that heard on the taped version.

The Tin Man also enters as a multi-dimensional character. He is able to joke about rusting in place, but is sad at his fate of becoming metal piece by piece. His tin form is the result of his human body being chopped by an enchanted ax. He was cursed by a witch in order to dissuade him from loving a local girl. The Scarecrow, reaffirming his role as comic relief, asks, “At no time did it dawn on you to get a new ax?” As the Tin Man is both a funny and sympathetic character, he performs several songs during the first act that explore these elements. “If I Could Feel” is suggestive of soul ballads, contrasting his “Slide Some Oil to Me,” which is reminiscent earlier Broadway character pieces.

“Slide Some Oil to Me” occurs when Dorothy and Scarecrow first happen upon the Tin Man and he asks them for help in retrieving oil for his joints. The song harkens back to big band music, not unlike Louis Prima’s (“I Ain’t Got Nobody”), including lyrical references, such as “I’m beginning to feel just fine.” To capitalize on the title, the very first musical sound heard for the song is an ascending slide played by trombone.<sup>28</sup> This sound effect is highlighted at several points throughout, occasionally being taken over by saxophone.<sup>29</sup> Piano and drum set accompany the tone changes around the midpoint, where it becomes akin to a soft-shoe number.<sup>30</sup> The clarinets play a descending tetrachord repeatedly while the drums mimic the sounds of tap.<sup>31</sup>

“If I Could Feel” is the Tin Man’s “I Want” song, and due to this, is very close in tone and instrumentation to Dorothy’s “Soon As I Get Home” from earlier in the show. Though the very opening to the number features piano, guitar, bass, and drum set, more traditional instrumentation enters almost immediately. As the Tin Man ponders “what” he would do if he could feel, the word

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<sup>28</sup> OR, Track 8, 0:00.

<sup>29</sup> OR, Track 8, 0:16.

<sup>30</sup> OR, Track 8, 1:31.

<sup>31</sup> It is possible in some productions the taps are provided onstage by the performers; on the recording it is supplied by the drums.

is punctuated by an ascending *glissando* in the harp.<sup>32</sup> Because the character is putting the ability to experience emotions into perspective, and excited about it, the orchestral instruments, when they first enter, often play short, ascending patterns. As the number progresses, the sounds become layered and increase in volume moving toward the climax. For example, when he suggests that he “could cry,” a short, ascending scale sounds in the violins before they begin to play a *tremolo*.<sup>33</sup> As the Tin Man gains in confidence, brass instruments become more prominent, following the pattern of short, ascending lines.<sup>34</sup> The fact that the melodic movement is upward, and ascends through nearly the entire complement of the pit from bottom to top, it demonstrates the character’s hope for the journey ahead. Combining rock and orchestral timbres also tie this number to several others in the show, including those sung by Dorothy, and later by Glinda.

The Lion is similarly a comic foil to Dorothy’s straight man. Though admittedly a coward, his comments about the things that scare him are a series of punchlines. He claims his fear derives from being an only child and completing therapy with an owl. He attempts to fool the travelers into believing that he is braver than he is by singing “I’m a Mean Ole Lion” before they are all properly introduced.

The song, in the same tradition as “Magic to Do” from *Pippin*, opens with a groove in the piano and drum set, which continues, and features brass and saxophone choir. This is the primary instrumentation throughout, though the electric guitar later enters to also play a groove.<sup>35</sup> The use of the brass instruments in this number is somewhat ironic; if the audience did not know that his bravery was an act, the choice of using loud, powerful instruments might convince them that he is

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<sup>32</sup> OR, Track 12, 0:14.

<sup>33</sup> OR, Track 12, 0:58.

<sup>34</sup> OR, Track 12, 2:19, trombone enters.

<sup>35</sup> OR, Track 9, 0:54.

unafraid. The Lion even engages in call-and-response with the trumpets at one point in the song.<sup>36</sup> It is also interesting to note that the Lion has the least varied instrumentation in his number in comparison to the other traveling companions.

The four friends, as one by one they join the group, engage in the song “Ease on Down the Road,” which functions, much like “Follow the Yellow Brick Road,” as traveling music.<sup>37</sup> Easily the most funk-based song in the show, the instrumentation is mostly guitar, bass, and drum kit, with later appearances from several auxiliary percussion and brass instruments that serve to highlight certain phrases. For example, with “pick your left foot up,” the tambourine sounds.<sup>38</sup> The more rock-based timbre sets “Ease on Down the Road” apart from other numbers in the show, linking it much more to music of the time, like Stevie Wonder’s “Superstition.”

### **The Score: Aunt Em and The Wizard**

The very first song of the show after the overture concerns Aunt Em and her feelings toward Dorothy. While Aunt Em states outright that she loves Dorothy very much, she also demands that she become more responsible around the farm. Her featured number, “The Feeling We Once Had,” makes use of the majority of the pit, though much of the accompaniment sounds in the more traditional voices. When the number begins, synthesized organ plays the opening groove, with the drum set marking beats two and four.<sup>39</sup> Shortly into the first verse of the number, violins enter, playing sustained notes against the vocal line.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> OR, Track 9, 0:37.

<sup>37</sup> Though the number repeats over the course of *The Wiz* on stage, “Ease on Down the Road” only appears once on the commercial recording.

<sup>38</sup> OR, Track 7, 0:40.

<sup>39</sup> OR, Track 2, 0:00.

<sup>40</sup> OR, Track 2, 0:24.



The flute fills a rather large role in this number, entering during the first verse in the same vein as the violins and then later playing countermelodies against the vocalist.<sup>41</sup> Though the first portion of the song suggests a purely popular sound, the introduction of these instruments serves several purposes. They help to both feminize Aunt Em and mark her as a safe, maternal figure, as flute and violins play at a piano volume in their upper registers, lightly and unobtrusively. This combination of orchestral and rock instrumentation is also a foreshadowing of the accompaniment we later get with Dorothy, who is constantly striving to return to Kansas and to Aunt Em.

As “The Feeling We Once Had” continues, several more markers of popular music appear. As the drum set had played offbeats during the opening section of the song, later the tambourine performs this function, sounding on every single beat of the 4/4.<sup>42</sup> This change in timbre provides a slight folky feel. In addition, backup singers sound at several points throughout the song, echoing sentiments heard from Aunt Em, including “Don’t lose the feeling we once had.”<sup>43</sup> This technique harkens to both popular solo artists who employed backup singers as well as the score to *Promises, Promises*, which made use of amplified voices in the pit.<sup>44</sup>

The song includes two climactic points, both preceded by a violin flourish and involve the first appearances of the brasses, though they are much less prominent than the other instruments. The connotation of brasses as powerful perhaps reinforces for the audience that not only is Aunt Em a secure older woman, but also that her feelings for her niece are similarly strong. Though the electric guitar is present in this number, it takes a background role, either playing along with other instruments or supplying *ostinati*. This is important in that the instrument plays almost throughout

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<sup>41</sup> OR, Track 2, 0:44 and 1:58.

<sup>42</sup> OR, Track 2, 1:27.

<sup>43</sup> OR, Track 2, 1:47.

<sup>44</sup> Please see Chapter 2 for a description of *Promises, Promises*.

the number so that the sound is there to reinforce the rock aspect, but the color is not so overt as to take away the more classical associations the audience would experience with Aunt Em. While the visual component of the song, taking place in Kansas on a farm, harkens to the early years of the twentieth century, the music places the listener in the present.

The Wizard's characterization is quite different than the man behind the curtain of older productions. He is portrayed in *The Wiz* as much more confident, demonstrated his music, such as "Y'all Got It." Even as the spectral form when he first appears to the travelers, the music does not serve to depict him as wholly terrifying in "So You Wanted to See the Wizard." Rather, while the music is in a minor mode, the tempo and rhythms are fast and jaunty as he interrogates the travelers.

"So You Wanted to See the Wizard" features one of the show's more eclectic uses of instrumentation. The opening groove is played by brass, saxophone, and drum set in a minor mode, but all music stops when the character poses the song's titular question. Immediately after this, the drum set reenters and the ends of the Wizard's melodic lines include brass stingers.<sup>45</sup> This timbre, mode, and volume all suggest that the Wizard could be antagonistic, especially given that the opening groove returns later in the numbers. However, the atmosphere changes through varying the instruments twice. When he acknowledges "I fly, and the magic of my power takes me higher," the violins play short, ascending *glissandi* in a major mode.<sup>46</sup> Not only do the ascending lines suggest flight and ascending, but the sudden switch in mode proposes the character might not be all bad. The violins later play sustained notes over grooves in the guitar and drums as he sings, "just keep your eyes open and the magic you will see."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> OR, Track 11, 0:21.

<sup>46</sup> OR, Track 11, 0:54.

<sup>47</sup> OR, Track 11, 1:11.

In his final number before the show ends, he again sings a fast-paced song describing his departure to the denizens of Oz, “Y’all Got It.” The happier, more confident Wiz sings in a major mode accompanied by brass instruments. The citizens of Oz also act as a backup chorus, repeating the title several times at the end of the song.<sup>48</sup>

### **The Score: The Witches**

There is no parallel to the MGM movie’s Miss Gulch in this production. While there is a direct correlation to the witches of the East and West with Evermene and Evilene, respectively, there is no antagonist who acts as a catalyst at the onset of the show. Staying much closer to the novel, the action immediately begins with the cyclone and exposure to the wicked witch does not occur until much later. Evilene is also, in opposition to the standard Witch of the West portrayal, somewhat funny. Instead of continuously setting out to find Dorothy and her friends as they journey, she tells her subordinates “Don’t Nobody Bring Me No Bad News.” Rather than a song set in a minor-mode and in a low register, as villainous songs often tend to be to reinforce impending peril, Evilene’s song is upbeat and includes support by the chorus. The style is reminiscent of earlier blues vocalists, such as Bessie Smith, as well as popular female artists of the time, such as Aretha Franklin.

“Don’t Nobody Bring Me No Bad News” is primarily a piano number, with a groove played by the instrument broken only to play *glissandi* and a series of flourishes alongside the vocalist at the end of the song.<sup>49</sup> The other featured instruments are trumpet and trombone. While brasses for other characters, such as the Lion, connote bravery or growing acceptance, for Evilene, the brasses reflect personality traits: boldness and self-assurance. However, even the brass instruments are

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<sup>48</sup> OR, Track 15, 1:47.

<sup>49</sup> OR, Track 13, 1:42 and 2:10.

somewhat subordinate to her, as they play alongside her servants as they repeat the phrase “no bad news.”<sup>50</sup>

Much like in the novel and earlier staged productions, Evilene rules over an army of enslaved Winkies, a prominent race in the Oz mythos. And instead of merely acknowledging the witch’s defeat and sending the group away, a celebratory number, “Brand New Day,” occurs prior to the four friends’ return to the Emerald City. The introduction to the song features a brass fanfare, which outlines the repeated phrase, “Can you feel the brand new day?”<sup>51</sup> The duration of the song includes repeated vocal and melodic figures, as the song restates the opening section two more times. The brass instruments here again signify increasing hopefulness, separating the song from Evilene’s previous number. Whereas viewers of the MGM film can associate a particular theme with appearances of Miss Gulch and the Wicked Witch of the West, in *The Wiz*, when Evilene is mentioned by name, a low piano *tremolo* and a cymbal crash occur.<sup>52</sup> The minor mode, the low register, and the sharpness of the crash reinforce Evilene as an adversary, even without additional explanation.

As in the familiar MGM production and original novel, there is a Glinda (Witch of the South) character, as well as a Witch of the North character, here named Addaperle. Glinda is the character that sets Dorothy’s return trip in motion, and is therefore cast as a more motherly figure, singing “Believe in Yourself.” Addaperle, contrarily, sets Dorothy on her journey through Oz in the first place, detailing the Wizard and the trek ahead. Addaperle is also cast as the more comical

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<sup>50</sup> OR, Track 13, 2:00.

<sup>51</sup> OR, Track 14, 0:33.

<sup>52</sup> *The Wiz* (Original Cast), Theatre on Film and Tape Archive, The New York Library for the Performing Arts, viewed June 28, 2015.

character, uttering phrases like, “Now, let’s get down to business, honey,” before trying to guess Dorothy’s identity with several stereotypical African-American names, like Starletta.<sup>53</sup>

Addaperle’s music further cements this characterization, with the chorus of Munchkins following along. The fast pace and wordplay of “He’s the Wizard” introduce Oz as a land of fun. While Addaperle serves primarily for exposition, she also provides humor to balance Dorothy’s confusion. She interacts with the Munchkins, outwardly idolizes her sister Glinda, and considers Dorothy’s otherworldliness with skepticism. Addaperle’s humor also affects her song. In “He’s the Wizard,” first heard in the overture, she, with the help of the Munchkins, perform a jazz-influenced song with presence of scatting.<sup>54</sup> This style aligns Addaperle more closely with performers such as Ella Fitzgerald. Because of this, Wheeler organized the instruments in the pit in a way that recreates the overall sound of a band accompanying such a singer. Though Addaperle’s accompaniment does not extend beyond piano, drum set, and brass throughout her song, it is interesting to note that instead of relying on instruments to provide certain sound effects, Munchkin backup singers serve this purpose. At the opening to the number, they sing “wah-wah” in the style of a brass instrument using a mute, and later, when Addaperle suggests that the Wiz could “make you a drink that would bubble and fizz,” the Munchkins make popping sounds with their mouths.<sup>55</sup>

Glinda appears only at the very end of *The Wiz* in order to help Dorothy realize that she possesses the power to return home. Portrayed as more glamorous and calmer than her sister Addaperle, her number, “If You Believe,” is similarly more mellow and serious than “He’s the

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<sup>53</sup> Stanley Richards (ed.), *Great Rock Musicals* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), 16.

<sup>54</sup> OR, Track 4.

<sup>55</sup> OR, Track 4, 1:21.

Wizard.” Opening with violins playing intervals of seconds, the song immediately has a dreamlike quality. This is further echoed in the choice of ascending and descending harp *glissandi*, which appear at several points throughout the number, associating Glinda with an angelic figure.<sup>56</sup> While the instruments play at a piano volume until the climax of the song, several countermelodies appear, performed by the English horn, flute, and violins.<sup>57</sup> The selection of these instruments not only reflects Glinda’s femininity, and parallels treatment of female characters in other productions considered in this study, but this also ties her directly to Dorothy, supported by similar instrumentation in her featured numbers.

### **The Score: The Tornado**

The tornado sequence veers from the traditional depiction. In the MGM version, Schumann’s “The Merry Farmer” and the Witch of the West’s theme play as Dorothy experiences being pulled into the cyclone, where she sees visions of both Kansas and Oz.<sup>58</sup> For *The Wiz*, the music takes on an almost disco character, full of syncopated rhythms and motivic recurrences, often supplied by the synthesizer. The scene is primarily visual, with the original choreography involving dancers in black bodysuits, carrying umbrellas, performing a series of turns across the stage, dizzying Dorothy as she tries to find shelter. One featured dancer, in red, performs with a large swath of cloth attached to a headpiece, and as they dance, the material wends its way around the stage, obscuring view and further disorienting the main character, much as the actual weather event would.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> OR, Track 16, 1:21.

<sup>57</sup> OR, Track 16, 0:13 and 0:57.

<sup>58</sup> The score for the MGM film was composed by Herbert Stothart and Harold Arlen.

<sup>59</sup> *The Wiz* (Original Cast), Theatre on Film and Tape Archive, The New York Library for the Performing Arts, viewed June 28, 2015.

As the number opens, one hears a wind machine, signifying the approaching twister. Almost immediately, violin *tremolo* sound.<sup>60</sup> The association of *tremolo* with some impending danger is significant here not only because cyclones can be deadly, but the effect also sound at another point in the show when Dorothy is expressing fear.

To demonstrate the tornado gaining ground and power, the entire complement of the pit plays, first trading off a short motive first heard in the trombone.<sup>61</sup> This approach continues, migrating between registers and timbres of the pit, creating a dizzying effect, before the instruments drop out. When this happens, the drum kit and electric guitar enter, playing short grooves, then compounded by other instruments, building to a climax.<sup>62</sup>

As with Aunt Em's preceding number, backup singers appear once again. Rather than reinforce lyrics, since this sequence has none, the voices instead sing on "ooh" syllables and occasionally short phrases like "comin' to get ya."<sup>63</sup> Not only does this tie the dance number to other songs in the production, but this also adds to the layering of timbres that make up the sonic version of a tornado.

The most prominent instrument in this number is the synthesizer, because instead of playing short motives, it enters on sustained pitches.<sup>64</sup> When that instrument begins playing, claps from the dancers provide percussion rather than any other instrument in the pit. The timbre changes because of these two elements, and the synthesizer continues to play throughout the remainder of

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<sup>60</sup> OR, Track 3, 0:03.

<sup>61</sup> OR, Track 3, 0:05.

<sup>62</sup> OR, Track 3, 0:20 and 0:37 for drum and guitar, respectively.

<sup>63</sup> OR, Track 3, 1:04.

<sup>64</sup> OR, Track 3, 1:36.

the number, infrequently changing pitch, and therefore creating an electronic drone among the rest of the instruments.

### **The Score: Other Dance Numbers**

There are several prominent dance numbers in *The Wiz*. Though the commercial recording only includes the Tornado sequence, other dance numbers include a Kalidah attack, an introduction citizens of Oz, poppies, and the Winkies at Evilene's palace.

One dance number that does not borrow from other musical material found in the show is the Kalidah attack. The Kalidahs, a race of insect-like creatures sent by Evilene to encumber the travelers, participate in a number not unlike the "Jitterbug" originally intended for the MGM film. However, because the creatures are antagonistic, the accompaniment is provided by the synthesizer, playing steady minor-mode chords, while a voiceover from Evilene intones, "I want those shoes!"

As the four travelers close in on their destination, they reach a field of poppies. Knowing that progressing through the flowers could result in any number of problems, the group decides to go around. Several chorus members, dressed as poppies, attempt to lure the travelers. Synthesizer and drums supply their dance accompaniment, greatly differentiating these characters from the other, more varied figures found throughout the show. The well-placed drumbeats also suggest an element of sensuality about the poppies, whose advances are eventually met by the Lion.

When the audience first sees the Emerald City, they behold a landscape resembling a green disco club. Because of the set dressing and staging, it was necessary for the music to reflect that character. A combination of piano and synthesizer sounds as underscoring during this entrance, furthering the connection to the disco atmosphere. Similarly, during the introduction to the flying



monkeys in the second act, the characters participate in an extended dance break to disco music.<sup>65</sup> While the music is again a departure from the traditional view of Oz, using music the audience would hear at festive gatherings allows for the understanding that the citizens of Oz and the flying monkeys are energetic characters who enjoy the company of their peers.

At the onset of the second act, the audience sees Evilene's headquarters. Her servants, the Winkies, enter and pull on a rope. As they pull in unison, they begin to vocalize on the phrase "Heave-ho," which then phases and becomes call-and-response, not unlike a field song. The dramatic function of this is to reinforce that these characters are indeed slaves under Evilene. This also reinforces a historical link for black characters in a show interspersed with modern music.

As the Winkies rejoice for their freedom after Evilene's defeat, they participate in a song and dance as celebration.<sup>66</sup> The second iteration of "Brand New Day" features a much higher presence of the electric guitar playing riffs. The tambourine is much more present as well, sounding much like folk rock as well as rejoicing. The dancers, in a nod to earlier Broadway shows, form a kick line.

The resolution with the Wiz involves a number of musical sound effects. For example, when the Scarecrow receives his brains, here being granted a GED, a piano accompanies the action. This effect sounds as though the Scarecrow is absorbing his knowledge the moment he is handed the document. When the Tin Man is given his makeshift heart, drumbeats mimic the heart.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> *The Wiz* (Original Cast), Theatre on Film and Tape Archive, The New York Library for the Performing Arts, viewed June 28, 2015. These musical moments are not available on the commercial soundtrack.

<sup>66</sup> *The Wiz* (Original Cast), Theatre on Film and Tape Archive, The New York Library for the Performing Arts, viewed June 28, 2015. As a musical in-joke, after the defeat of Evilene, a short iteration of Handel's refrain from "The Hallelujah Chorus" is heard.

<sup>67</sup> *The Wiz* (Original Cast), Theatre on Film and Tape Archive, The New York Library for the Performing Arts, viewed June 28, 2015.

### **Later Versions of the Show**

While several shows included in this study have been adapted for film, *The Wiz* is perhaps the most different when one considers the stage version compared to the screen. Originally to be produced by Motown, the movie rights were later obtained by Universal, who cast Diana Ross of The Supremes and Michael Jackson in the lead roles of Dorothy and the Scarecrow.<sup>68</sup>

Universal hired Joel Schumacher to adapt the show's script for the screen, and as a student of Erhard Seminars Training, or EST (as was Ross), tenets of that belief system appeared throughout the film. The behavior modification program, developed by Werner Erhard, intended to teach participants, also known as "trainees," that instead of facing adversity analytically, they should focus on the experience, disregarding prior events and living in the "now."<sup>69</sup> Some ideas included in the film are not being defined by one's past and a search for self-satisfaction, here using Oz and the well-known characters as a backdrop.

With Ross's participation, the characterization of a young Dorothy from Kansas was replaced with an older Dorothy, a teacher from Harlem dissatisfied with her routine. Instead of being carried away by a tornado, she becomes lost in a snowstorm on Thanksgiving, following her family's pronouncement that she is an adult who has yet to reach her full potential. The cosmos of Oz as a mythical locale became a dystopian vision of New York, in which the Munchkins became graffiti figures, the Winkies became sweatshop employees under Evileene's watch, the Scarecrow

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<sup>68</sup> Ross had seen *The Wiz* several times in New York and campaigned actively for the role of Dorothy. Her involvement aided in the move from Motown to Universal.

<sup>69</sup> "Werner Erhard," <http://www.wernererhard.com>, accessed on January 28, 2014. The site is maintained by former participants of EST and includes interviews with Erhard and testimonies regarding individual experiences.

a pile of garbage scraps, the Tin Man a carousel figure, the Lion a live version of the New York Public Library statues, and the Wizard a politician.

These changes to the depiction of the characters and of Oz itself are significant. To a degree, places and ephemera for the audience were various markers of New York. But whereas the stage version of *The Wiz* maintained the fantasy version of Oz known from the books and MGM film, the Oz of the 1978 film was much closer to reality, albeit a warped one. Life lessons gained from the original story, though still present, were less obvious in the dialogue as lessons from EST dominated the script. For example, toward the end of the movie, as Glinda explains Dorothy has the power to return home, stating: “Home is a place we all must find, child. It's not just a place where you eat or sleep. Home is knowing. Knowing your mind, knowing your heart, knowing your courage. If we know ourselves, we're always home, anywhere.”<sup>70</sup> The Scarecrow's lines include a number of famous quotations by writers, including Shakespeare, among others. Upon meeting the Wizard, who is portrayed as a coward, the Scarecrow tells him, “Public office is the last refuge of the incompetent!”

Beyond altering aspects of the story, there were also many changes to the score for the film. Several songs written for the stage by Charlie Smalls and William F. Brown were omitted and instead replaced with new numbers to adapt the work for the cast. The biggest change came with the Scarecrow, whose original song on stage, “I Was Born the Day Before Yesterday,” was replaced with “You Can't Win” in the film, written by Smalls and produced by Quincy Jones. Other alterations to the music come in switching the character who performs a given number, with an iteration of the song “Believe in Yourself,” originally performed by Glinda on stage, replaced

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<sup>70</sup> Sidney Lumet, *The Wiz*, Universal Studios, 2009. DVD.

with a version sung by Dorothy. With the exception of “He’s a Wizard,” songs about or sung by the Wizard were omitted, partially to illustrate Dorothy’s reaching her own potential in keeping with EST and her growing power and confidence, and perhaps partially to enhance Richard Pryor’s unsympathetic characterization of the Wizard.

One of the main character’s songs appears at a different point in the movie than the stage show, which also impacts the narrative. The Tin Man’s song “If I Could Feel,” performed for the Wizard in the stage show before he sends the four travelers to defeat Evillene, aids in urging the Wizard to promise the friends he will give them what they each want or need. In the film, the Tin Man sings the song immediately after the audience sees him for the first time and before “Slide Some Oil to Me.” The impact of this musical moment changes as, while the audience is reminded that he wants a heart, there is little interaction with the Wizard prior to the four being sent on their journey, and no sense of the Wizard gaining an understanding of their wants and needs.

The EST movement had a major impact on the film’s central narrative for several of the characters. As part of the behavioral program consisted of being browbeaten in order to learn how to overcome feelings of inadequacy, the main characters appear in various states of despair. As mentioned previously, the Scarecrow performed a different number in the movie. On stage, his feature song, “I Was Born the Day Before Yesterday” depicts him as being too new to the world to have experienced much, but he plans to think positively and move forward. In the film, the Scarecrow is bullied by crows, and instead of suggesting he simply does not yet know how to react, he sings “You Can’t Win, You Can’t Break Even,” showing him with a defeatist attitude. The stage song is a much slower gospel number with a positive message, including lyrics such as “I’m going to make it this time” and “Gonna lift my head up.” The movie’s song is faster and is in

a funk style, but carries a much more negative message, with lyrics such as “you only have yourself to blame” and “before someone blows out your flame.”<sup>71</sup>

Schumacher severely reduced the Wizard’s role in the film. In the stage show, while still revealed to be hiding behind a charade, he is genial and provides the four travelers with the items they need most: the ability to return home, a brain, a heart, and courage. Though reluctant to reveal himself as a man from Omaha, Nebraska to the citizens of Oz, he ends the show by giving a speech in the vein of great African-American orators about facing one’s fear and being truthful, culminating in the song, “Y’all Got It!” In the film, the Wizard is instead depicted as a former politician whose actions, aside from prompting their visit to Evillene, have no bearing whatsoever on the main characters’ individual resolutions. He never reveals himself to anyone else, nor attempts to make the trip home with Dorothy. His negative past experiences define him, making him an example of an EST failure.

Dorothy, who spends the better part of the film in tears because her return home is blocked by the actions of others, appears at the end as a successful participant in the program, realizing her own potential, contrasting with characters such as the Wizard. Dorothy is the one who delivers the message of facing one’s fears and becomes a resilient, strong woman, singing the Wizard’s stage number “Believe In Yourself.” Despite his titular status, shifting the triumph of self-realization to Dorothy makes the Wizard nearly superfluous in the overarching narrative. While the seminar’s themes likely did not resonate with all audiences, some viewers did connect with the messages, with one reviewer remarking that the character should be called “The Wicked Witch of EST.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Charlie Smalls, *The Wiz: Vocal Selections* (Alfred Publishing, 1984).

<sup>72</sup> Gerald Posner, *Motown: Music, Money, Sex, and Power* (New York, Random House, 2002), 295.

The biggest changes to orchestration for the movie, executed by Quincy Jones, come with the characters of Dorothy and the Lion. Whereas in the stage version Dorothy is much more closely aligned with orchestral instruments, in the film her accompaniment relies less on those instruments as prominent voices and more on guitar and piano. The Lion, for whom the use of brass in the stage version could suggest some latent courage, is also accompanied more so by strummed guitar during his “Be a Lion” vocals. Though these choices reflect on the contemporary musical world of the film’s creative teams and stars, they are marked differences.

The film also incorporates or extends several instrumental and dance breaks. The music for the tornado is gone and replaced by only *tremolo* strings and brass playing bell tones; this still suggests that the snowstorm is trouble, but the sequence is truncated and has no discernible *ostinato*. The dance breaks for the Munchkins and citizens of Oz are both extended, reusing material from earlier in the preexisting music from the show.

The most notable addition to dance music occurs during “Brand New Day.” In the film, the sweatshop workers strip off their outer layers and continue to celebrate. As they peel off their outerwear, the electric bass, saxophones, and trumpets play newly-composed music. Afterwards, the accompaniment takes on the tone of a hoedown, with orchestral strings, which are mostly absent from the number proper, playing a more intricately rhythmic version of the melody before returning to the music originally used for the stage.

The 2015 NBC production of *The Wiz* is much closer to the original stage production in overall terms of the script, scenery, and characterization. However, due to its formatting as a live broadcast hoping to attract a large viewership, the creators made some changes with the audience

in mind. These changes included certain aspects of Dorothy's portrayal, the inclusion of a song from the 1978 film, and the casting of Queen Latifah as the Wizard.

In the original novel, Dorothy is portrayed as a very young girl. The MGM film and the 1975 stage production, though casting teenagers Judy Garland and Stephanie Mills, respectively, aimed for a youthful depiction of the character. Dorothy in both of these cases underwent maturation because of her time in Oz, coming to appreciate her home and family through her experiences, though continually wanting to return to Kansas. In 2015, with Shanice Williams as Dorothy, the character sustained a few changes. Though still becoming more mature as the story progressed due to her time in Oz, instead of being portrayed as a little girl, Dorothy was instead depicted as a teenager, much like Williams herself. Rather than the iconic gingham dress and pigtails, this Dorothy wore a short plaid skirt, red leather jacket, and a headband. Similarly, whereas Mills's Dorothy was an incorrigible dreamer who became an obstacle to those trying to work on her Kansas farm, Williams's Dorothy repeatedly expressed her desire to return to Omaha (where the Wizard is from, coincidentally, in the various versions), where her mother had lived. At the start of her journey in Oz, this "I Want" aspect is firmly in place, until she begins to miss her aunt, sparking her maturation process and subsequent desire to return to Kansas.

The script for the special, written by Harvey Fierstein, did intend to create an updated version of the character. In interviews with *The Hollywood Reporter*, Fierstein suggests that in previous iterations, certain questions, such as the fate of Dorothy's parents, went unanswered, and the character became a victim in several senses. He points to her being spirited to Oz with little impetus, and missing the balloon ride back with the Wizard by accident. Thus, in order to give her a reason to want to go home, the backstory of being orphaned in Omaha allowed for conflict at the start of the show with her aunt, as well as the reason she gives for missing her chance to go home.

Dorothy realizes she no longer belongs in Omaha, but rather belongs in Kansas, and must find a way to get there on her own. Fierstein explained further, “She becomes the hero of her own story in this version, which I’m very proud of.”<sup>73</sup>

The Scarecrow’s song from the stage, “I Was Born on the Day Before Yesterday,” was replaced in the televised special with the song performed by Michael Jackson in the film, “You Can’t Win.” The reason for the substitution is not immediately apparent in promotional materials, but perhaps it is because the film version’s number is so much more recognizable and available to audiences that it warranted inclusion in the new version. As Michael Jackson was a selling point for the film, drawing parallels to him might also have been savvy marketing.<sup>74</sup>

Casting was an important component of the 2015 version of the musical, just as it had been with the film; in both cases, it helped gain viewership. However, while Diana Ross’s participation as Dorothy was meant to help pull in audiences, with the additional promise of Michael Jackson, the 2015 version took a slightly different approach. Shanice Williams as Dorothy was the only cast member who was not previously known to audiences, had earned the part through numerous auditions, and was given an “introducing” credit on promotional materials in magazines and on television. Other members of the cast, in parts both large and small, were well-known for various reasons.

Stephanie Mills as Aunt Em had previously played the role of Dorothy on stage, a fact that recurred in interviews and stories leading up to the broadcast, a tie to the original. Queen Latifah is known to many as both a rapper and an actress in many roles. Elijah Kelley as the Scarecrow,

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<sup>73</sup> Ashley Lee, “*The Wiz*: Why NBC’s Live Version Introduces ‘Empowered’ Female Characters,” *Hollywood Reporter*, November 30, 2015.

<sup>74</sup> “You Can’t Win” was released as a single by Epic Records in early 1979, as advertised in the January 27, 1979 edition of *Billboard*.



was mainly known for the film version of *Hairspray*, among other projects. David Alan Grier, the Lion, is notable primarily for being a comic actor, associated with his run on TV's *In Living Color*. Singers Mary J. Blige (Evilene), Ne-Yo (Tinman), and Common (the bouncer) have been working primarily in the music industry as R&B artists, though they each have acting credits as well. The two good witches, played by Amber Riley and Uzo Aduba, are recognizable for their work on *Glee* and *Orange Is the New Black*, respectively. The array of names and backgrounds reaches out, then, to a wide audience, including traditional theatergoers who know the show and Mills, fans of R&B, and those who recognize the performers from other projects.

Because the televised special was based on the stage production, the music kept more in line with what was heard for the original Broadway show, with a few minor alterations, especially in lieu of the Scarecrow's substituted number.

## **Conclusion**

Over the last forty years, *The Wiz* has been seen in three different ways. The 1975 stage version took the familiar Baum story and translated elements of dialogue and music for a black cast. A run of 1,672 performances, a 1984 revival, and several tours have allowed the production to be seen by many people. The film version used the story for reference, but altered many elements to respond to both the black experience of the 1970s and the cast. Through a theatrical run, televised airings, and availability of recordings, the film has had its own lasting impact as the version of the musical with which many audiences have become familiar.

*The Wiz* is an integral show in Broadway history, though often relegated to an aside or footnote in scholarship. The marriage of well-established material to non-traditional casting, with the aid of modern music, is significant, as it helped set the table for subsequent shows like 2015's

*Hamilton*. The acknowledgement in the subtitle that the show is a “Super Soul Musical” created avenues for other styles and subgenres of popular music to be employed in Broadway productions. Instrumentally, the use of a pit that includes both traditional and rock instruments, and pairing them together in a variety of ways not only creates ties to other productions in this study (in particular *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *A Chorus Line*), but further cements orchestrational precedents. Mostly, how Wheeler orchestrated for *The Wiz* demonstrated that a fantasy can be supported with modern, recognizable music and not lose any of its imaginative power.

## **Chapter 9: Rock's Continuing Presence on Broadway**

This dissertation has combined the study of three separate musical elements (rock musicals, orchestration, and character), all of which have been afforded some prior scholarship, but necessitate even more, with attention to overlap, to demonstrate their significance in larger musical and historical contexts. The continuing timeline and development of Broadway shows, rock styles as they became interwoven into scores, and approach to orchestration are all fields with a plethora of opportunities for further studious advancement.

Looking at these eight shows, one encounters several “firsts”: the first acknowledged rock musical, the development of a studio album into a stage production, and one of the first shows to include amplification in the pit. While these facts might seem like asides on the surface, surveying the Broadway landscape after the premieres of *Hair*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Promises, Promises* demonstrates the impacts those ideas had. Many shows are now rock-based and very few eschew amplification. From that standpoint, further scholarship could demonstrate exactly how sound systems have continued to be used for musicals and how that aligns with popular artists employing such systems.

Considering the social and political implications of these shows in a larger context invites even more examination. The music by itself, with orchestrational and melodic associations creates many ties for the audience. However, the plot, dialogue, setting, and casting choices factor into those decisions, and provide a path for later productions. Tackling subjects such as the Vietnam War, relationships, religion, history, and race all allow for a variety of musical treatments. That rock instrumentation was chosen to help illustrate these topics demonstrates an effort to make issues relatable with a more familiar musical soundscape.

*Promises, Promises*, without the involvement of Bacharach and what his score necessitated, could have become dated, drawing on older genres. Both *Company* and *A Chorus Line* could have invited many styles of music to help tell the stories with such diverse groups of characters, but the choices made allow for particular interpretations. *Jesus Christ Superstar* could easily have been made into an oratorio or non-rock opera to align the production with traditionally sacred genres. *The Wiz* might have become mired in blatant caricatures with different musical choices. Because of the musical and orchestrational choices made, the productions have a very different reception and legacy, and their influences are numerous. Without the eventual acceptance of more cutting-edge music in the theater, some productions, among them the hip-hop musicals *In the Heights* (2008) and *Hamilton* (2015), would not be possible. Given our current attitude toward rock musicals as the general approach to the genre, it is interesting to return to the time when that approach was brand new and somewhat divisive.

Discussing rock as a driving force in the theater also requires attention paid to economic and advertising considerations. Because rock music was a widely appealing style, some productions were purposely aimed toward a more youthful market, noticeably with shows like *Hair* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. This, too, is impactful for today's reception of rock musicals, with popular artists enlisted as composers or orchestrators and their names billed on most, if not all, advertising for shows, much like Burt Bacharach with *Promises, Promises*. Examples of this include Cindy Lauper's *Kinky Boots* (2013) and Bono's *Spiderman: Turn Off the Dark* (2011).

As stated in the introduction, Broadway orchestration and orchestrators are difficult subjects to examine beyond simply discussing biographies because many orchestral scores only exist in part, if at all, or cannot be accessed. Further difficulties in discussing orchestration for musicals are abundant, but perhaps with addressing the work that goes into the original products,

as well as the work that goes into tailoring scores for the studio, tours, and other media, new patterns and approaches can be discerned.

In terms of studying how instrumental choices affect characterization and narrative, much more can still be done. Beyond Broadway, these ideas are also applicable to opera studies and film studies. Comparisons between more works and across decades and the *oeuvres* of important orchestrators could help contribute to a discussion of the Broadway canon in much the same way as it does in examinations of the traditional Western musical canon.

Coming out of this dissertation, there are several further topics that would be beneficial in continuing to expand scholarship on orchestration in this genre. They include process, performers, revivals, and touring companies. Each of these categories is ripe for additional study and occasionally impacted shows included in this project.

The reasons theatrical orchestrators and arrangers make certain decisions can be based on a variety of factors, including the action or drama of a given moment, pit personnel, evoking an image, or personal preference. Over the course of the eight case studies included in this project, each of these possibilities has come into play in some capacity. Each of these rationales could potentially open up pathways for interdisciplinary research with theater, literature, and technical aspects, looking deeper at the source material and script requirements.

Process is difficult to articulate for many people, and for musicians who are no longer living, it becomes pure speculation. However, knowing the approach one takes in completing their duties for a given work could provide substantial insight. Clay Zambo, a theatrical composer and orchestrator, when asked about how collaboration impacted his work, stated:

Everything from a lyricist saying, "what if it were a long note here" to a director suggesting that the song moment really belongs to a different

character than I've written for, or that the song I've written is too long to support the action of the moment (or too short), or that the music doesn't feel emotionally right for the moment. (On a show a while back, everybody else on the team argued that the music I'd written for a scene was too interesting. They convinced me. I wrote something simpler.) Ultimately I trust my own instincts, but I work with people I trust, so I listen to their feedback always. I don't want them to tell me how to do my job; I'll figure out my own solution to a problem, but I will always listen....Beyond that, every situation is different. Musical theatre composers hardly ever write our own orchestrations--mostly this is due to time constraints, but often it's because many of us don't have orchestra-writing skills. Or we prefer to work with arrangers who are even more versed in the style of a show than we are. Sometimes we write our own vocal or dance arrangements, and sometimes not; it's a matter of time, interest and skill. I like doing my own choral parts, but if I had a ton of lyrics left to write and I was in rehearsal already I happily cede the job to someone else. We hardly ever write our own incidental music, because the MD [musical director] is in the room to know what's needed and we're often not. Musicals are so highly collaborative, there are so many people working on them, that ultimately you have to work with people you trust and can communicate well with.<sup>1</sup>

Pit performers similarly deserve more scholastic attention. As musicians are expected to play multiple instruments, substitute on a moment's notice, and be flexible enough to change style and character as needed, their history also needs to be told. Given existing rules for the orchestra pit, especially those under guidelines determined by the musicians union in New York, the restrictions placed on those performers and the regulations for touring, pit personnel need further examination.<sup>2</sup>

Revival productions are usually major overhauls of the original productions, including drastic changes in their orchestrations, which may or may not be completed by the original person.

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<sup>1</sup> Electronic interview, August 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Steven Suskin, *The Sound of Broadway Music: A Book of Orchestrators and Orchestrations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 235-36. The author describes the process for determining the number of pit musicians allowed in a Broadway theater based on its proportionate size and union-obligated minimums. While Suskin acknowledges the economic and logistical issues these restrictions pose, the impact on individual scores is not addressed.

Changes appear to be impacted by a number of reasons, including updated technologies, and a perceived demand for a “fresh sound.” While the shows in this dissertation have been revived, and allow for a number of observations, many more shows invite the same.

Touring productions may provide some of the most fruitful discussion of all. In recent years, live musicians for tours have increasingly been replaced by synthesized musicians or recorded parts. While this does save on expenses, there is a definite difference in sound between a production in an ongoing venue and one on the road. Whether it is that the timbre is different, the sense of a live human playing is gone, or that the score does not match up with what a listener expects, these issues could allow for increased disciplinary studies, perhaps with the added element of cognition.

Since so many musicals undergo drastic changes between stage and film, this is another avenue to explore, particularly regarding orchestration and how it changes between productions. With an increase in film musicals over the last few years and televised specials competing for ratings on FOX and NBC, these conversations would not only prove interesting, but timely.

The impact of including rock music and instrumentation in theatrical works, as evidenced by the shows in this study, is historically and dramatically significant. As the end of the 1970s neared, many new musical productions incorporated some element of popular music that aided with characterization. Even without directly acknowledging that aspect, the fact that rock was acceptable in the theater made musicals increasingly more accessible to audiences who primarily listened to popular styles. As the decade drew to a close, more varieties of rock music began to be heard on stage more frequently and the trend of discussing political or social issues within the shows likewise continued.

*The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* (1978), for example, drew heavily on country and western concepts, detailing the lives of young women working in a brothel dubbed “The Chicken Ranch,” to the consternation of many locals. Ballads and songs with traditional accompaniment support the girls during portions of the plot, meant to reinforce their innocence, femininity, and naiveté. Contrarily, when the characters deal with clients or are merely thinking of the Chicken Ranch, the musical styles reflect rock, and the show as a whole relies heavily on the use of guitar. As subgenres of rock music carried loaded sexual connotations, those styles were more appropriate for the brothel setting and scenarios. This divisive approach also reflects both the musical depictions of women from the earlier-discussed productions, echoing the treatments of Mary Magdalene, Fran Kubelik, and Catherine, as well as a split between depictions of innocence and extroversion, seen with a character like Pippin over the course of his development.<sup>3</sup>

The rock opera *Starmania* (1978) carried on the legacies of *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Hair* in detailing sociopolitical subject matter — in this case, a dystopian future civilization, transvestitism, and television— within the context of a musical. The show shares several other commonalities with the preceding works. The Canadian production began as a concept album, later being translated, both linguistically (from Quebecois French to English) and for the stage, first premiering in Paris. Like *Superstar*, the creation of the work in the studio allowed for the music to be heard and to receive public and critical reactions before it appeared on stage, as well as get a sense of what the music should sound like in a live space. Additionally, several songs from the musical became hits separately from the show, including “The World Is Stone,” later covered by artists such as Cyndi Lauper and Celine Dion.<sup>4</sup> This is not unlike *Hair*, where the song

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<sup>3</sup> Carol Hall, *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, MCA MCAD-11683, 1997. CD.

<sup>4</sup> In coverage of the twentieth anniversary of the musical for RFI, Valérie Passelègue points out that the musical’s album was extremely popular in France, going gold twice within weeks of its release, before seeing similar success



“Aquarius” became a standalone hit on the charts, demonstrating that advanced marketing can be beneficial.

Members of the creative team from *Hair* continued to develop shows throughout the remainder of the decade as well. Galt MacDermot participated in building several others, including *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1971), *Via Galactica* (1973), and *Dude* (1973, with Ragni). *Two Gentlemen of Verona* was loosely adapted from Shakespeare’s play of the same name, but redressed for a more racially mixed cast; *Via Galactica* detailed fringe members of society banished to live on an asteroid, and *Dude* drew from the story of the Garden of Eden and the struggle of good and evil.<sup>5</sup> While *Two Gentlemen*, which relied heavily on the pastiche musical approaches first seen in *Hair*, was a moderate success, the latter two were absolute failures, mostly due to their complicated plots. In *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, MacDermot’s approach to orchestration was much like it was for *Hair*, a rock ensemble whose roles varied to best support the character(s) at hand.

While more shows premiered during this time, most considered in this project continued to run, demonstrating their popularity and staying power; several of them, as of the writing of this dissertation, still among the longest-running musicals in Broadway history. In addition, cast album sales continued to increase, spreading their popularity even farther.<sup>6</sup> *Hair* ran from its premiere in 1968 until 1972, totaling 1,750 performances; *Promises, Promises* ran during the same years, with

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in America and the U.K. [http://www.rfimusic.com/musiqueen/articles/060/article\\_6899.asp](http://www.rfimusic.com/musiqueen/articles/060/article_6899.asp). Accessed May 20, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> For *Two Gentlemen of Verona*’s premiere, the roles of Valentine and Sylvia were played by black performers (Jonelle Allen and Clifton Davis), and the roles of Julia and Thurio were played by Latin-American actors (Diana Davila and Raul Julia). See Galt MacDermot, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Decca Broadway 440 017 565-2, 2002. CD.

<sup>6</sup> In October 2015, commenting on the success of the *Hamilton* soundtrack, *Billboard* acknowledged the chart rankings of several musical albums, noting that *Hair* was number 1 on the charts for thirteen weeks in 1969, the highest placement of any musical album by that publication. Keith Caulfield, “*Hamilton*’s Historic Chart Debut: By the Numbers,” *Billboard*, October 7, 2015.

a total of 1,281 performances during its original run. *Company* ran for a slightly shorter period (1970-1972), totaling 705 performances; *Jesus Christ Superstar* ran from 1971 to 1973, with 711 showings. *Pippin* showed for five years (1972-1977), running 1,944 times; *Grease* ran from 1972 until 1980, with 3,388 performances. *A Chorus Line* ran initially from 1975 until 1990, with 6,137 performances, and *The Wiz* ran from 1975 until 1979, totaling 1,672 performances.<sup>7</sup>

Several of the musicals in this study also went on to become films. Along with the previously discussed adaptations of *Grease* (1978) and *The Wiz* (1978) in their respective chapters, *Hair*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *A Chorus Line* also became films. *Hair* was released in 1979, with slight modifications to the plot, including Berger honoring Claude's draft notice by mistake. *Superstar* came out in 1973, featuring an additional framing device of an archaeological dig to bookend the story; it was later adapted for a television special in 2000, and a recorded arena tour version in 2012, in which the sets and costuming were updated and included the addition of social media.<sup>8</sup> *A Chorus Line* was released in 1985 to mixed reviews in part because of director Richard Attenborough's expansion of the film beyond the confines of the audition space. *New York Times* film critic Vincent Canby stated that the movie was "less a movie than an expensive souvenir program."<sup>9</sup> One commonality between these filmed productions is that the scores underwent some changes, including removing and adding numbers, and altering the orchestration, given the flexibility of a film orchestra.

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<sup>7</sup> "Hair," "Promises, Promises," "Company," "Jesus Christ Superstar," "Grease," "Pippin," "A Chorus Line," and "The Wiz," *The Internet Broadway Database*, accessed June 26, 2016. Individual site listings can be found in the Bibliography.

<sup>8</sup> Gale Edwards, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2001, DVD, and Laurence Connor, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, Universal Studios Home Entertainment, 2013, DVD.

<sup>9</sup> Vincent Canby, "Film: Attenborough's *Chorus Line*," *The New York Times*, December 10, 1985.

*Pippin* and *Company* also had a chance to be viewed by those that could not attend a formal theatrical production. *Pippin* was filmed for Canadian television in 1981, retaining several original cast members, including Ben Vereen.<sup>10</sup> A theatrical film version was announced through the Weinstein Company in 2013.<sup>11</sup> *Company* was filmed live on stage in 2011, and the resulting recording was shown theatrically in June of that year.<sup>12</sup>

### **The 1980s**

While American productions continued to be mainstays on Broadway, with shows such as *Dreamgirls* (1981), the 1980s saw such productions as the British-Swedish *Chess* (1988), and the arrival of additional European imports, including *Starlight Express* (1984 in London and 1987 in New York) and *Cats* (1981 in London and 1982 in New York). Without precedents provided by the studied shows, these projects, especially given their scopes and scores, would not have been possible.

*Dreamgirls*, chronicling the development and individual careers of members of a girl group styled after The Supremes, employs a score infused with rhythm and blues, soul, and funk, very similar to the musical sounds heard in *The Wiz*. Not only do the styles affix the group as among the successful African-American acts of the 1960s and 70s, but the music serves a non-diagetic function as well during “I Want” songs. As such, the orchestra for *Dreamgirls* requires primarily electric and rock instruments (guitar and bass) to provide the appropriate sonic backdrop for the story, as well as reeds, trumpets, and trombones.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> David Sheehan, *Pippin*, VCI Video, 2000, DVD.

<sup>11</sup> Dave McNary, “Weinstein Co. Developing ‘Pippin’ Movie,” *Variety*, December 10, 2013. <http://variety.com/2013/film/news/weinstein-co-developing-pippin-movie-1200940788/>, accessed August 25, 2016.

<sup>12</sup> Lonny Price, *Company*, Image Entertainment, 2012, DVD.

<sup>13</sup> “*Dreamgirls*,” *Playbill*, <http://www.playbill.com/production/dreamgirls-ambassador-theatre-vault-00000000983>, accessed June 10, 2016.

Rather than drawing exclusively from more traditional music to portray an international chess tournament between a Russian and American player, *Chess* included both standard Broadway music and rock styles, continuing the approach of pastiche seen in musicals such as *Hair* and *Company*. Written by ABBA's Benny Anderssen and Bjorn Ulvaeus, along with Tim Rice as lyricist, the music allowed for the American character—named Freddie Trumper in later productions—to be characterized as difficult and rebellious through the use of popular styles and the support of a rock ensemble. The Russian character, depicted as more rigid and nationalistic, is contrasted through the inclusion of traditional music and orchestral instrumentation, with special attention paid to Russian musical elements, including modality, and a patriotic anthem.<sup>14</sup> This division allows the audience to determine with which character they should sympathize and which is the potential antagonist, not unlike the use of instruments to create this dichotomy in *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Andrew Lloyd Webber's approach of marrying traditional and contemporary styles and timbres continued through the late 1970s and 1980s. In depicting the life of Argentinian first lady Eva Peron in *Evita* (1978 in London and 1979 in New York), characteristics seen earlier in *Jesus Christ Superstar* return. Eva's accompaniment for more traditionally feminine moments is conveyed through orchestral instrumentation, while more aggressive moments are supplemented by rock instrumentation, similar to the musical treatment of Jesus. The people of Argentina as a collective whole are also treated in this way; their gratitude and lamentations are emotions supported by traditional orchestra, and anger concerning rights and opportunities is enhanced with rock music.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Tim Rice, *Chess*, RCA Records CPL2-5340, 1984. CD.

<sup>15</sup> Andrew Lloyd Webber, *Evita*, MCA MCAD2-42334, 1976. CD. This information is for the Original London Cast Recording.

Lloyd Webber's *Starlight Express* and *Cats*, similar in that they are both dance-based musicals constructed around gatherings (of train cars and felines, respectively), also reflect the approaches seen earlier in *Jesus Christ Superstar*, including use of an array of instruments (both traditional and rock), and employing rock instrumentation more boldly with antagonists or during moments of high tension. And also similar to their predecessors, like *Hair* and *Pippin* in addition to *Superstar*, each show's first notes sound from a member of the rock ensemble, in these latter instances the synthesizer, previewing for the audience the musical sounds they will hear for the duration of the production.<sup>16</sup>

Even in what is perhaps Lloyd Webber's most famous work, *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986), rock instruments are in the pit and used for numbers that highlight the title character's god-like, dangerous, rock star status.<sup>17</sup> Despite the show's setting in the 1880s and in the Paris Opera house, synthesizer, drum set, and electric guitar are prominent. The Phantom's "otherness" and threatening presence is best understood through the title song. Under the chorus's intoning of, "He's there, the Phantom of the Opera," the electric guitar plays riffs. The bridges between verses of the song likewise feature heavy use of the drum set, contrasting the orchestral music and recurring motives aligned with other characters and scenarios. Arranging for rock ensemble as a means to characterize the antagonists of a tale also figured in earlier Lloyd Webber works.

Other popular period pieces in the 1980s similarly incorporated rock into their scores. Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil's *Les Misérables* (1987) requires several synthesizers and guitars to accompany the work.<sup>18</sup> The bulk of the score conveys a symphonic musical sound,

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<sup>16</sup> Andrew Lloyd Webber, *Cats*, Really Useful Records B0006632-02, 2005, CD and Andrew Lloyd Webber, *Starlight Express*, Really Useful Records B0006637-02, 2005. CD.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew Lloyd Webber, *The Phantom of the Opera*, Really Useful Group 314 543 928-2, 1987. CD.

<sup>18</sup> The show had its original run in London's West End in 1985. The Broadway premiere was in 1987. Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg, *Les Misérables*, Geffen 24151-2, 1987. CD.

reflecting the setting of novel author Victor Hugo's early nineteenth century; however, certain melodic gestures and characters, like the comically-evil Monsieur Thénardier, invite modern music. When antagonistic characters appear, including Thénardier and, more prominently, the police captain Javert, rock instrumentation again sounds. Lloyd Webber preceded this approach in works like *Superstar*. Because of the stark difference in timbres, the music signals to the audience that the characters present are less trustworthy.

### **The 1990s**

The 1990s saw an increase in both new works and revivals. Stephen Sondheim's *Assassins* (1990) and Jonathan Larson's *Rent* (1996), for example, drew on rock styles to help characterization in those shows. *Assassins*, a later work by Sondheim, describes in turn the acts of successful and would-be presidential assassins. As the timeline of the show ranges from the 1860s to the 1980s, from John Wilkes Booth through John Hinckley, the musical styles similarly vary to accommodate for passing time. Much like *Company*, the show is not so overtly rock-based as mid-to-late twentieth century offerings, but the score does call for guitar and keyboards for several numbers.<sup>19</sup>

Jonathan Larson's *Rent* (1996), a modern version of Puccini's *La Bohème* that focused on a group of artists in New York struggling during the AIDS epidemic, is almost completely rock-based.<sup>20</sup> Even in quoting their source material through the appearance of "Musetta's Waltz," the melody is played on electric guitar. This approach made the show very accessible for the audience, allowing for an extended run, as well as a film adaptation.

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<sup>19</sup> Stephen Sondheim, *Assassins*, RCA Victor 60737-2-RC, 1991. CD.

<sup>20</sup> Jonathan Larson, *Rent*, Dreamworks DRMD2-50003, 1996. CD.

Schönberg and Boublil's other prominent hit, *Miss Saigon* (1991), a redressing of the Puccini opera *Madama Butterfly*, includes both orchestral and rock instruments. Orchestral timbres are featured during scenes featuring traditional Vietnamese practices, such as a wedding scene, and in more intimate moments between the two main characters. Rock instruments and styles help reinforce the time period of the Vietnam War and, much like *Superstar*, support moments of high tension.<sup>21</sup>

The Who's *Tommy* opened on Broadway in 1993. Drawing on the music of the concept album, the score is primarily rock in its instrumentation with some orchestral instruments, including French horn and orchestral strings.<sup>22</sup> Because *Tommy* had had success as a recording, and because of the 1975 film release, there was an expectation that the music heard in the theater would match those versions. The stage musical was well-received, in large part due to its preservation of as much of the album's musical atmosphere as possible.

### **The 2000s**

More recent productions include entirely popular music, whether they were conceived as jukebox musicals or have been newly constructed for the stage. It is possible that additional reasons for this choice includes advancements made in sound systems for the theater, or possibly planning ahead for the touring productions, additional synthesizers might replace members of the pit.

A jukebox musical based on the works of ABBA, *Mamma Mia* (2001) entirely carries the accompaniment of rock instruments. In this case, the rationale was likely to keep the sound as similar to the original tracks as possible. The overture, crafted out of various melodies heard

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<sup>21</sup> Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg, *Miss Saigon*, Geffen Records 9 24271-2, 1990. CD.

<sup>22</sup> "Tommy," *The Internet Broadway Database*, <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-production/the-whos-tommy-4715>, accessed May 20, 2016.

throughout the duration of the show, begins with a short *ostinato* in the bass and synthesizer, keeping in line with several preceding shows.

*Hairspray* (2002), adapted from John Waters' 1988 film of the same name, falls into the same category as *Grease*, transporting the audience to the 1960s. Focusing on race and acceptance, Tracy Turnblad makes an adolescent project to help integrate a local television program. The variety in instrumentation for this show serves to highlight the differences between the black and white characters, similar to treatment seen in *Hair*, reflecting 1960s pop as well as gospel and soul.<sup>23</sup>

Stephen Schwartz's *Wicked* (2003), much like *Pippin*, is an intricately orchestrated project.<sup>24</sup> Orchestrated by William David Brohn, *Wicked* draws on Gregory Maguire's novel concerning two of the witches of Oz, friendship, ostracism, and acceptance. With a sizable pit of 23 musicians, many of whom are expected to play multiple instruments, the sound of the show draws on and combines many styles, both orchestral and popular.<sup>25</sup> Musical supervisor Stephen Oremus noted that a synthesis of styles was intentional to create the world of Oz.<sup>26</sup> Because the plot revolves around witches and a fantasy world, the musicians perform a variety of sound effects, including *glissandi* and *tremolos*.

*Next to Normal* (2009) details the interactions of a family whose matriarch suffers from a number of psychological issues, including bipolar disorder and depression. The anger and aggression displayed by the characters, whose frustrations come to a head, is supported by heavy

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<sup>23</sup> Marc Shaiman, *Hairspray*, Sony Classical SK 87708, 2002. CD.

<sup>24</sup> Stephen Schwartz, *Wicked*, Decca Broadway B0001682-02, 2003. CD.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Laird, *Wicked: A Musical Biography* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011), 223-24.

<sup>26</sup> Laird, *Wicked: A Musical Biography*, 219.



rock and played by guitars and synthesizers, while the ballads are in rock love-ballad styles, similar in style and range to numbers discussed in the chapters of this work.<sup>27</sup>

*Jersey Boys* and *Beautiful*, jukebox musicals in which the music of The Four Seasons and Carole King helps illuminate the biographies of these artists, respectively, necessitated rock music for the score. Though some additional instruments were added to the scores for color, the arrangers recreated the orchestrations to keep as true as possible to the music that the audiences would already know.<sup>28</sup>

Green Day's *American Idiot* adds a plot and specified characters to a staging of their album of the same name—an approach also seen in *Mamma Mia*, whose score was written by Anderssen and Ulvaeus.<sup>29</sup> While the accompaniment of Green Day's original recordings was solely by rock ensemble, the stage show incorporated other instruments and redistributed the vocal parts among the entirety of the cast rather than solely featuring a lead singer. Much like *Jesus Christ Superstar* or *Tommy*, prior knowledge of the music allowed for an anticipated audience for *American Idiot*, and keeping the score fairly faithful to the original songs gave the viewers additional familiarity.

The year 2015 saw the debut of two new productions whose scores are primarily popular while still telling stories that occur in the past, akin to *Superstar* and *Pippin: Something Rotten* and *Hamilton*.<sup>30</sup> The former takes place during the Renaissance and centers on William Shakespeare's dealings with a rival writing team, while the latter is a non-traditionally cast staging of the biography of Alexander Hamilton. Because treating historical figures with rock instrumentation—

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<sup>27</sup> Tom Kitt, *Next to Normal*, Ghostlight Records 8-4433, 2009. CD.

<sup>28</sup> Bob Gaudio, *Jersey Boys*, Rhino R2 73271, 2005, CD and Gerry Goffin and Carole King *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, Ghostlight Records 84483, 2014. CD.

<sup>29</sup> Green Day, *American Idiot*, Reprise Records 9362-49675-6, 2010. CD.

<sup>30</sup> Wayne and Karey Kirkpatrick, *Something Rotten*, Ghostlight Records 8-1595, 2015, CD and Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Hamilton*, Atlantic Records 551093-2, 2015. CD.

also seen previously in *Hair* with Abraham Lincoln—was an approach accepted by audiences, considering Shakespeare and Hamilton with rock was not perceived as inappropriate. Both shows similarly include traditional instrumentation to highlight particular dramatic moments.

The inclusion of rock and hip-hop in *Hamilton* in particular, has allowed the historical figure further accessibility to youth, with reviewers constantly remarking that the show “skews young.”<sup>31</sup> The aim toward a more youthful demographic also aligns this show to *Hair* and *Superstar*, whose creative teams expected more interest in contemporarily-scored musicals from younger audiences and thus marketed the shows accordingly.

These shows represent only a sampling of the musical work that has been done on Broadway in the years after the eight case studies. The approaches seen in those shows, including use of a rock ensemble and varying the instrumentation to define characters, reflect a popular artist or song, or to show distinctions between styles, have trickled down in some capacity to nearly all later shows.

Observing numerous parallels between shows confirms the legacy of musicals considered in this study and solidifies the notion that beginning in 1968 with *Hair* a true turning point was made for musicals and that drawing on popular music and its instrumentation gave a show an additional pop cachet, marketing strategy, and new creative tools.

“Few people who go to the theater even know what an orchestrator is! The contribution he makes to a show should not be ignored and his function should, by this time, no longer be such a mystery.” —Stephen Sondheim<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Stephen M. Silverman, “*Hamilton* on Broadway: What’s all the Fuss About?” *Newsweek*, August 6, 2015.

<sup>32</sup> Craig Zadan, *Sondheim & Co.* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1989), 154.

## Appendix A: Information for *Hair*<sup>1</sup>

The show premiered on April 29, 1968 at the Biltmore Theatre in New York City. The production closed on July 1, 1972, running for a total of 1,750 performances.

### Technical Credits:

**Director:** Tom O'Horgan

**Dance Director:** Julie Arenal

**Producer:** Michael Butler

**Book and Lyrics:** Gerome Ragni and James Rado

**Music and Orchestrations:** Galt MacDermot

**Scenic Design:** Robin Wagner

**Costume Design:** Nancy Potts

**Lighting Design:** Jules Fisher

**Sound Design:** Robert Kiernan

### Cast List:

**Claude:** James Rado

**Berger:** Gerome Ragni

**Ron:** Ronald Dyson

**Woof:** Steve Curry

**Hud:** Lamont Washington

**Sheila:** Lynn Kellogg

**Jeanie:** Sally Eaton

**Dionne:** Melba Moore

**Crissy:** Shelley Plimpton

**Tribe/Assorted Characters:** Donnie Burks, Lorrie Davis, Leata Galloway, Steve Gamet, Walter Harris, Paul Jabara, Diane Keaton, Hiram Keller, Jonathan Kramer, Marjorie LiPari, Emmaretta Marks, Natalie Mosco, Suzannah Norstrand, and Robert I. Rubinsky

### Orchestral Breakdown:

**Electric Piano:** Galt MacDermot

**Guitar:** Alan Fontaine, Charlie Brown, and Jimmy Lewis

**Bass:** Jimmy Lewis

**Clarinet and Saxophone:** Zane Paul Zacharoff

**Trumpet:** Donald Leight and Eddie Williams

**Percussion:** Warren Chiasson

**Drums:** Leo Morris

**Conductor:** Galt MacDermot

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<sup>1</sup> "Hair," *The Internet Broadway Database*, <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-production/hair->

3393, accessed May 21, 2016 and Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archives, original program, file of materials related to *Hair*.

## **Musical Numbers**

### **Act 1**

“Aquarius” (Ron and Company)  
 “Donna” (Berger and Company)  
 “Hashish” (Company)  
 “Sodomy” (Woof and Company)  
 “Colored Spade” (Hud and Company)  
 “Manchester” (Claude and Company)  
 “Ain’t Got No” (Woof, Hud, Dionne, and Company)  
 “I Believe in Love” (Sheila)  
 “Air” (Jeanie, Crissy, Dionne, and Company)  
 “Initials” (Company)  
 “I Got Life” (Claude and Company)  
 “Going Down” (Berger and Company)  
 “Hair” (Claude, Berger, and Company)  
 “My Conviction” (Tourist Lady and Company)  
 “Easy to Be Hard” (Sheila)  
 “Don’t Put It Down” (Berger, Steve, and Woof)  
 “Frank Mills” (Crissy)  
 “Be-In” (Company)  
 “Where Do I Go?” (Claude and Company)  
 “Dead End” (Dionne, Emmaretta, Leata, Suzannah, and Joe)

### **Act 2**

“Electric Blues” (Suzannah, Leata, Steve, and Paul)  
 “Black Boys” (Martha, Suzannah, and Natalie)  
 “White Boys” (Dionne, Lorrie, and Emmaretta)  
 “Walking in Space” (Company)  
 “Abie Baby” (Hud, Jim, Ron, and Lorrie)  
 “Three-Five-Zero-Zero” (Company)  
 “What a Piece of Work Is Man” (Ron and Walter)  
 “Good Morning Starshine” (Sheila and Dionne)  
 “The Bed” (Company)  
 “The Flesh Failures/Let The Sunshine In” (Claude, Sheila, Dionne, and Company)

## Appendix B: Information for *Promises, Promises*<sup>2</sup>

The show premiered on December 1, 1968 at the Schubert Theatre in New York City. The production closed on January 1, 1972, running for a total of 1,281 performances.

### Technical Credits:

**Director:** Robert Moore

**Producer:** David Merrick

**Choreographer:** Michael Bennett

**Composer:** Burt Bacharach

**Lyricist:** Hal David

**Orchestrator:** Jonathan Tunick

**Dance Arranger:** Harold Wheeler

**Set Design:** Robin Wagner

**Costume Design:** Donald Brooks

**Lighting Design:** Martin Aronstein

**Sound Design:** Admins, Ltd.

### Cast List:

**Chuck Baxter:** Jerry Orbach

**Fran Kubelik:** Jill O'Hara

**Dr. Dreyfus:** A. Larry Haines

**Sheldrake:** Edward Winter

**Marge MacDougall:** Marian Mercer

**Sylvia Gilhooley:** Adrienne Angel

**Peggy Olson:** Millie Slavin

**Vivien Della Hoya:** Donna McKechnie

**Miss Wong:** Baayork Lee

**Miss Polanski:** Margo Sappington

**Jesse Vanderhof:** Dick O'Neill

**Mr. Eichelberger:** Vince O'Brien

**Mr. Dobitch:** Paul Reed

**Mr. Kirkeby:** Norman Shelly

**Helen Sheldrake:** Kay Oslin

**Karl Kubelik:** Ken Howard

**Assorted Characters:** Barbara Alston, Rod Barry, Carole Bishop, Gene Cooper, Graciela Daniele, Bob Fitch, Betsy Haug, Neil Jones, Rita O'Connor, Gerry O'Hara, Scott Pearson, Michael Shawn, Julane Stites, Michael Vita

**Orchestra Voices:** Kelly Britt, Margot Hanson, Bettye McCormick, Ilona Simon

**Orchestral Breakdown:** The exact names of the instrumentalists who played for the original production are unavailable

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<sup>2</sup> "Promises, Promises," *The Internet Broadway Database*, <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-production/promises-promises-3438>, accessed May

21, 2016 and Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archives, original program, file of materials related to *Promises, Promises*.

**Musical Numbers:****Act 1**

“Half as Big as Life” (Chuck)

“Upstairs” (Chuck)

“You’ll Think of Someone” (Chuck and Fran)

“Our Little Secret” (Chuck and Sheldrake)

“She Likes Basketball” (Chuck)

“Knowing When to Leave” (Fran)

“Where Can You Take a Girl?” (Mr. Dobitch, Mr. Eichelberger, Mr. Kirkeby, and Jesse Vanderhof)

“Wanting Things” (Sheldrake)

“Turkey Lurkey Time” (Vivien Della Hoya, Miss Polanski, and Miss Wong)

**Act 2**

“A Fact Can Be a Beautiful Thing” (Chuck and Marge MacDougall)

“Whoever You Are” (Fran)

“A Young Pretty Girl Like You” (Chuck and Dr. Dreyfuss)

“I’ll Never Fall in Love Again” (Chuck and Fran)

“Promises, Promises” (Chuck)

## Appendix C: Information for *Company*<sup>3</sup>

The show premiered April 26, 1970 at the Alvin Theatre in New York City. The production closed on January 1, 1972, running for a total of 705 performances.

### Technical Credits:

**Director/Producer:** Harold Prince

**Composer/Lyricist:** Stephen Sondheim

**Book:** George Furth

**Orchestrator:** Jonathan Tunick

**Dance Arrangements:** Wally Harper

**Choreographer:** Michael Bennett

**Set Design:** Boris Aronson

**Costume Design:** D.D. Ryan

**Lighting Design:** Robert Ornbo

**Sound Design:** Jack Mann

### Cast List:

**Bobby:** Dean Jones (Larry Kert also on recording on “Being Alive” bonus track)

**Sarah:** Barbara Barrie

**Harry:** Charles Kimbrough

**Jenny:** Teri Ralston

**David:** George Coe

**Amy:** Beth Howland

**Paul:** Steve Elmore

**Susan:** Merle Louise

**Peter:** John Cunningham

**Joanne:** Elaine Stritch

**Larry:** Charles Braswell

**Marta:** Pamela Myers

**Kathy:** Donna McKechnie

**April:** Susan Browning

**Vocal Minority:** Cathy Corkill, Carol Gelfand, Marilyn Saunder, Dona D. Vaughn

**Orchestral Breakdown:** The exact names of the instrumentalists who played for the original production are unavailable

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<sup>3</sup> “Company,” *The Internet Broadway Database*, <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-production/company-3077>, accessed May 21, 2016

and Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archives, original program, file of materials related to *Company*.

**Musical Numbers:****Act 1**

“Company” (Robert and the company)  
“The Little Things You Do Together”  
(Joanne and the company)  
“Sorry, Grateful” (Larry, David, and Harry)  
“You Could Drive a Person Crazy” (Marta,  
Kathy, and April)  
“Have I Got a Girl For You” (Larry, David,  
Harry, Peter, and Paul)  
“Someone is Waiting” (Robert)  
“Another Hundred People” (Marta)  
“Getting Married Today” (Amy, Paul,  
Jenny, and the company)

**Act 2**

“Side By Side/What Would We Do Without  
You” (Robert and the company)  
“Poor Baby” (Sarah, Jenny, Amy, Joanne,  
and Susan)  
“Tick Tock” (Kathy)  
“Barcelona” (Robert and April)  
“The Ladies Who Lunch” (Joanne)  
“Being Alive” (Robert)



## Appendix D: Information for *Jesus Christ Superstar*<sup>4</sup>

The show premiered at the Mark Hellinger Theatre in New York City on October 12, 1971. It closed on July 1, 1973, running for a total of 711 performances.

### Technical Credits:

**Director:** Tom O'Horgan

**Producer:** Robert Stigwood

**Composer/Orchestrator:** Andrew Lloyd Webber

**Lyricist:** Tim Rice

**Set Design:** Robin Wagner

**Costume Design:** Randy Barcelo

**Lighting Design:** Jules Fisher

**Sound Design:** Taplin Productions

**Simon Zealotes:** Dennis Buckley/John Gustafson

**Pontius Pilate:** Barry Dennen

**King Herod:** Paul Ainsley/Mike d'Abo

**Peter:** Michael Jason/Paul Davis

**Additional Characters:** Robalee Barnes, Eddie Barton, Steven Bell, Ferne Bork, Alan Braunstein, Celia Brin, Kay Cole, Dennis Cooley, Charlotte Crossley, Denise Delapenha, Pi Douglas, Tony Gardner, Robin Grean, Cliff Lipson, Doug Lucas, Michael Meadows, Laura Michaels, Anita Morris, Ted Neeley, Cecilia Norfleet, Janet Powell, Linda Rios, James Sbrano, Peter Schlosser, Bonnie Schon, Tom Stovall, Paul Sylvan, Margaret Warncke, Willie Windsor, Samuel E. Wright, and Kurt Yaghjian

**Cast List:** The original Broadway cast will be listed on the left, and the cast for the concept album, which was consulted for this project, will be listed on the right.

**Jesus:** Jeff Fenholt/Ian Gillan

**Judas:** Ben Vereen/ Murray Head

**Mary Magdalene:** Yvonne Elliman

**Caiaphas:** Bob Bingham/Victor Brox

**Annas:** Phil Jethro/Brian Keith

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<sup>4</sup> "Jesus Christ Superstar," The Internet Broadway Database, <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-production/jesus-christ-superstar-3614>, accessed May

21, 2016 and Stanley Richards, ed., *Great Rock Musicals* (New York: Stein and Say Publishers, 1979), 242-45.

**Orchestral Breakdown:** The list of personnel for the original Broadway production is unavailable. For the concept album, the musicians were:

**Pianos/Keyboards:** Norman Cave, Carl Jenkins, Peter Robinson, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Mick Weaver.

**Guitars:** Clive Hicks, Henry McCulloch, Chris Spedding, Louis Stewart, Steve Vaughan

**Bass Guitar:** Jeff Clyne, Peter Morgan, Alan Spanner, Alan Weighall

**Drums/Percussion:** John Marshall, Bill LeSage, Bruce Rowland

**Moog Synthesizer:** Alan Doggett

**Bassoon:** Anthony Brooke, Joseph Castaldani

**Flute:** Chris Taylor, Brian Warren

**Clarinet:** Ian Herbert

**Horns:** James Brown, Jim Buck Sr., Jim Buck Jr., John Burdon, Andrew McGavin, Douglas Moore

**Trumpets:** Harold Beckett, Les Condon, Ian Hamer, Kenny Wheeler

**Trombones:** Keith Christie, Frank Jones, Anthony Moore

**Strings:** City of London Ensemble

## **Musical Numbers:**

### **Act 1**

“Overture”

“Heaven on Their Minds” (Judas)

“What’s the Buzz” (Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and Apostles)

“Strange Thing Mystifying” (Judas)

“Everything’s Alright” (Mary Magdalene, Jesus, Judas, Apostles, and company)

“This Jesus Must Die” (Caiaphas, Annas, and Priests)

“Hosanna” (Jesus, Caiaphas, and Company)

“Simon Zealotes” (Simon and Company)

“Poor Jerusalem” (Jesus)

“Pilate’s Dream” (Pontius Pilate)

“The Temple” (Jesus and Company)

“I Don’t Know How to Love Him” (Mary Magdalene)

“Damned for All Time” (Judas, Annas, Caiaphas, and Priests)

### **Act 2**

“The Last Supper” (Jesus, Judas, and Apostles)

“Gethsemane” (Jesus)

“The Arrest” (Peter, Jesus, Apostles, Reporters, Caiaphas, and Annas)

“Peter’s Denial” (Peter, Mary Magdalene, and Company)

“Pilate and Christ” (Pilate, Soldier, Jesus, and Company)

“King Herod’s Song” (Herod)

“Judas’s Death” (Judas and Company)

“Trial Before Pilate” (Pilate, Caiaphas, Jesus, and Company)

“Superstar” (Judas and Company)

“The Crucifixion” (Jesus and Company)

“John 19:41” (Instrumental)

## Appendix E: Information for *Grease*<sup>5</sup>

The show premiered on February 14, 1972 at the Eden Theatre in New York City until June 4th, later running at the Broadhurst (June 7 to November 18, 1972), the Royale (November 21 to January 27, 1980), and lastly at the Majestic from January 29 until it close on April 13, 1980. The production completed a total of 3,388 performances.

### Technical Crew:

**Director:** Tom Moore

**Choreography and Staging of Musical Numbers:** Patricia Birch

**Set Design:** Douglas W. Schmidt

**Costume Design:** Carrie F. Robbins

**Lighting Design:** Karl Eigsti

**Orchestrations:** Michael Leonard

**Musical Direction and Vocal Arrangements:** Louis St. Louis

### Cast List:

**Miss Lynch:** Dorothy Leon

**Patty Simcox:** Ilene Kristen

**Eugene Florczyk:** Tom Harris

**Jan:** Garn Stephens

**Marty:** Katie Hanley

**Betty Rizzo:** Adrienne Barbeau

**Doody:** James Canning

**Roger:** Walter Bobbie

**Kenicke:** Timothy Meyers

**Sonny:** Jim Borrelli

**Frenchy:** Marya Small

**Sandy Dumbrowski:** Carole Demas

**Danny Zuko:** Barry Bostwick

**Vince Fontaine:** Don Billett

**Johnny Casino:** Alan Paul

**Cha-Cha di Gregorio:** Kathi Moss

**Teen Angel:** Alan Paul

**Orchestra:** A list of personnel for the original production is unavailable.

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<sup>5</sup> Stanley Richards (ed.), *Great Rock Musicals* (New York: Stein and Day, 1979), 173-75.

## **Musical Numbers:**

### **Act 1**

“Alma Mater” (Miss Lynch, Patty, and Eugene)

“Alma Mater Parody” (Pink Ladies and Burger Palace Boys)

“Summer Nights” (Danny, Sandy, Pink Ladies, and Burger Palace Boys)

“Those Magic Changes” (Doody, Burger Palace Boys, and Pink Ladies)

“Freddy, My Love” (Marty, Jan, Frenchy, and Rizzo)

“Greased Lightnin’” (Kenicke and Burger Palace Boys)

“Mooning” (Roger and Jan)

“Look at Me, I’m Sandra Dee” (Rizzo)

“We Go Together” (Pink Ladies and Burger Palace Boys)

### **Act 2**

“Shakin’ at the High School Hop” (Company)

“It’s Raining on Prom Night” (Sandy and radio voice)

“Shakin’ at the High School Hop”-reprise (Company)

“Born to Hand Jive” (Johnny Casino and Company)

“Beauty School Dropout” (Teen Angel, Frenchy, and Chorus)

“Alone at a Drive-In Movie” (Danny and Burger Palace Boys)

“Rock ‘n’ Roll Party Queen” (Doody and Roger)

“There Are Worse Things I Could Do” (Rizzo)

“Look at Me, I’m Sandra Dee”-reprise (Sandy)

“All Choked Up” (Sandy, Danny, and Company)

“We Go Together”-reprise (Company)

## Appendix F: Information for *Pippin*<sup>6</sup>

The show premiered on October 23, 1972 at the Imperial Theatre before transferring to the Minskoff Theatre on March 15, 1977, completing its run there on June 12<sup>th</sup> of that year, running a total of 1,944 performances.

### Technical Credits:

**Director/Choreographer:** Bob Fosse

**Producer:** Stuart Ostrow

**Composer:** Stephen Schwartz

**Orchestrator:** Ralph Burns

**Book:** Roger O. Hirson

**Set Design:** Tony Walton

**Costume Design:** Patricia Zipprodt

**Lighting Design:** Jules Fisher

**Sound Design:** Abe Jacob

### Cast List:

**Leading Player:** Ben Vereen

**Pippin:** John Rubinstein

**Charlemagne:** Eric Berry

**Fastrada:** Leland Palmer

**Berthe:** Irene Ryan

**Catherine:** Jill Clayburgh

**Lewis:** Christopher Chadman

**Theo:** Shane Nickerson

**Additional Characters:** Roger A. Bigelow, Candy Brown, Cheryl Clark, Kathryn Doby, Gene Foote, Roger Hamilton, Richard Korthaze, John Mineo, Jennifer Nairn-Smith, Ann Reinking, Paul Solen, Pamela Sousa

### Orchestra:

**Keyboards:** Michael Alterman and Edward Strauss

**Woodwinds:** John Campo, Sampson Giat, Seymour Press, and Daniel Trimboli

**Brass:** Irving Berger, Eddie Bert, Arthur Goldstein, Doug Norris, Kenny Rupp, and Tony Salvatori

**Strings:** Maurice Bialkin, Al Fishman, Ronald Lipscomb, Fred Manzella, and Marvin Morgenstern

**Guitars:** Michael Fleming, Charles Macey, and Don Thomas

**Harp:** Nancy Brennand

**Percussion:** Bernie Karl, Stanley Koor, and Maurice Mark

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<sup>6</sup> "Pippin," *The Internet Broadway Database*, <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-production/pippin-3096>, accessed May 21, 2016.

## **Musical Numbers**

### **Act 1**

“Magic to Do” (Leading Player and Company)

“Corner of the Sky” (Pippin)

“War is a Science” (Charlemagne and Pippin)

“Glory” (Leading Player)

“Simply Joys” (Leading Player)

“No Time at All” (Berthe)

“With You” (Pippin)

“Spread a Little Sunshine” (Fastrada)

“Morning Glow” (Pippin and Company)

### **Act 2**

“On the Right Track” (Pippin and Leading Player)

“Kind of Woman” (Catherine)

“Extraordinary” (Pippin)

“Love Song” (Pippin and Catherine)

“Finale” (Company)

## Appendix G: Information for *A Chorus Line*<sup>7</sup>

The show opened on July 25, 1975 at the Schubert Theatre in New York City. The production closed on April 28, 1990, running for a total of 6,137 performances.

### Technical Credits:

**Director/Choreographer:** Michael Bennett

**Producer:** Joseph Papp

**Composer:** Marvin Hamlisch

**Lyricist:** Edward Kleban

**Orchestrators:** Bill Byers, Hershy Kay, Jonathan Tunick, Philip J. Lang, Harold Wheeler, Ralph Burns, and Larry Wilcox.

**Libretto:** James Kirkwood and Nicholas Dante

**Set Design:** Robin Wagner

**Costume Design:** Theoni V. Aldredge

**Lighting Design:** Tharon Musser

**Sound Design.** Abe Jacob

### Cast List:

**Zach:** Robert LuPone

**Larry:** Clive Clerk

**Cassie:** Donna McKechnie

**Sheila:** Carole (Kelly) Bishop

**Val:** Pamela Blair

**Kristine:** Renee Baughman

**Diana:** Priscilla Lopez

**Connie:** Baayork Lee

**Judy:** Patricia Garland

**Bebe:** Nancy Lane

**Maggie:** Kay Cole

**Richie:** Ronald Dennis

**Al:** Don Percassi

**Paul:** Sammy Williams

**Mike:** Wayne Cilento

**Greg:** Michel Stuart

**Bobby:** Thomas J. Walsh

**Don:** Ron Kuhlman

**Mark:** Cameron Mason

**Frank:** Michael Serrecchia

**Vicki:** Crissy Wilzak

**Butch:** Chuck Cissel

**Roy:** Scott Allen

**Tricia:** Donna Drake

**Tom:** Brandt Edwards

**Lois:** Carolyn Kirsch

<sup>7</sup>, Museum of the City of New York, Theater Archives, original program, file of materials related to *A Chorus Line*, "A Chorus Line," *The Internet Broadway Database*,

<https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-production/a-chorus-line-3752>, accessed May 21, 2016, and Steven Suskin, *The Sound of Broadway Music: A Book of Orchestrators and Orchestrations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 362-363.



**Orchestra:****Guitar:** George Davis, Jr.**Bass Guitar:** Roland Wilson**Upright Bass:** Jaime Austria**Harp:** Bernice Horowitz**Reeds:** Joseph Maggio, Marvin Roth,  
Stanley Brauner, and Norman Wells**Trumpet:** Bob Millikin and Al Mattaliano**Trombone:** Vincent Forchetti and Gordon  
Early Anderson**Bass Trombone:** Blaise Turi**Keyboards:** Fran Liebergall**Drums:** Allen Herman**Percussion:** Benjamin Herman**Musical Numbers:**“I Hope I Get It” (Company): orchestrated  
by Jonathan Tunick“I Can Do That” (Mike): orchestrated by  
Bill Byers“And...” (Bobby, Richie, Val, and Judy):  
orchestrated by Hershy Kay“At the Ballet” (Sheila, Bebe, and Maggie):  
orchestrated by Jonathan Tunick“Sing” (Al and Kristine): orchestrated by  
Hershy Kay“Hello Twelve, Hello Thirteen, Hello Love”  
(Company): orchestrated primarily by Larry  
Wilcox, with some work by Ralph Burns“Nothing” (Diana): orchestrated by Jonathan  
Tunick“Dance Ten, Looks Three” (Val):  
orchestrated by Philip J. Lang“The Music and the Mirror” (Cassie): the  
song is orchestrated by Bill Byers and the  
dance arrangements were by Harold  
Wheeler“One” (Company): orchestrated by Hershy  
Kay“What I Did For Love” (Diana and  
Company): orchestrated by Jonathan Tunick“One” Reprise (Company): orchestrated by  
Hershy Kay with some work by Ralph  
Burns

## Appendix H: Information for *The Wiz*<sup>8</sup>

The show premiered on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1975 at the Majestic Theatre in New York City, running at that location until May 25, 1977, then transferring to the Broadway Theatre from May 25, 1977 until closing January 28, 1979, running for a total of 1,672 performances.

### Technical Credits:

**Director:** Geoffrey Holder

**Choreography and Staging of Musical Numbers:** George Faison

**Composer:** Charlie Smalls

**Librettist:** William F. Brown

**Set Design:** Tom H. John

**Costume Design:** Geoffrey Holder

**Lighting Design:** Tharon Musser

**Orchestrations:** Harold Wheeler

**Vocal Arrangements:** Charles H. Coleman

**Dance Arrangements:** Timothy Graphenreed

**Musical Director:** Tom Pierson

### Cast List:

**Dorothy:** Stephanie Mills

**Scarecrow:** Hinton Battle

**Tinman:** Tiger Haynes

**Lion:** Ted Ross

**Addaperle:** Clarice Taylor

**The Wiz:** Andre DeShields

**Evilene:** Mabel King

**Glinda:** Dee Dee Bridgewater

**Toto:** Nancy

**Uncle Henry:** Ralph Wilcox

**Aunt Em:** Tasha Thomas

**Tornado:** Evelyn Thomas

**Yellow Brick Road:** Ronald Dunham, Eugene Little, John Parks, Kenneth Scott

**Crows:** Wendy Edmead, Frances Morgan, Ralph Wilcox

**Gatekeeper:** Danny Beard

**Lord High Underling:** Ralph Wilcox

**Soldier Messenger:** Carl Weaver

**Winged Monkey:** Andy Torres

**Pit Singers:** Frank Floyd, Sam Harkness, Jozella Reed, Tasha Thomas

**Chorus** (provide the roles of Munchkins, Kalidahs, Field Mice, Poppies, and Emerald City Citizens): Phylicia Ayers-Allen, Lettie Battle, Phillip Bond, Leslie Butler, Pi Douglass, Ronald Dunham, Wendy Edmead, Rodney Green, Eugene Little, Eleanor McCoy, Frances Morgan, Joni Palmer, John Parks, Kenneth Scott, Evelyn Thomas, Andy Torres, Carl Weaver, Ralph Wilcox

<sup>8</sup> "The Wiz," *The Internet Broadway Database*, <https://www.ibdb.com/broadway-production/the-wiz->

3716, accessed May 21, 2016, and Richards, *Great Rock Musicals*, 6-9.

**Orchestra:** A listing of personnel who played for the original run of the show is unavailable.

## **Musical Numbers:**

### **Act 1**

“The Feeling We Once Had” (Aunt Em)

“Tornado Ballet”

“He’s the Wizard” (Addaperle and Munchkins)

“Soon As I Get Home” (Dorothy)

“I Was Born on the Day Before Yesterday” (Scarecrow and Crows)

“Ease on Down the Road” (Dorothy, Scarecrow, and Yellow Brick Road)

“Slide Some Oil to Me” (Tin Man)

“Mean Ole Lion” (Lion)

“Kalidah Battle”

“Be a Lion” (Dorothy and Lion)

“Lion’s Dream” (Lion and Poppies)

“Emerald City Ballet”<sup>9</sup>

“So You Wanted to Meet the Wizard” (The Wiz)

“If I Could Feel” (Tin Man)

### **Act 2**

“No Bad News” (Evilene)

“Funky Monkeys” (Monkeys)

“Brand New Day” (Company)<sup>10</sup>

“Who Do You Think You Are?” (Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tinman, and Lion)

“Believe in Yourself” (The Wiz)

“Y’all Got It!” (The Wiz)

“Believe in Yourself”-reprise (Glinda)

“Home” (Dorothy)

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<sup>9</sup> Music by Timothy Graphenreed and George Faison.

<sup>10</sup> Lyrics by Luther Vandross.

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